THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE TWO GUARDIANS," "HENRIETTA'S WISH,"
"THE KINGS OF ENGLAND,"
ETC., ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

HEIR OF REDCLYFFE.

CHAPTER I.

> In such pursuits if wisdom lies,
> Who, Laura, can thy taste despise?
>
> GAY.

THE drawing-room of Hollywell House was one of the favoured apartments, where a peculiar air of home seems to reside, whether seen in the middle of summer, all its large windows open to the garden, or, as when our story commences, its bright fire, and stands of fragrant green-house plants contrasted with the wintry fog and leafless trees of November. There were two persons in the room—a young lady, who sat drawing at the round table, and a youth, lying on a couch near the fire, surrounded with books and newspapers, and a pair of crutches near him. Both looked up with a smile of welcome at the entrance of a tall, fine-looking young man, whom each greeted with "Good-morning, Philip."

"Good-morning, Laura. Good-morning, Charles; I am glad you are down stairs again! How are you to-day?"

"No way remarkable, thank you," was the answer, somewhat wearily given by Charles.

"You walked?" said Laura.

"Yes. Where's my uncle? I called at the post-office, and brought a letter for him. It has the Moorworth post-mark," he added, producing it.

"Where's that?" said Charles.

"The post-town to Redclyffe; Sir Guy Morville's place."

"That old Sir Guy! What can he have to do with my father?"

"Did you not know," said Philip, "that my uncle is to be guardian to the boy—his grandson."

"Eh? No, I did not."

"Yes," said Philip; "when old Sir Guy made it an especial point that my father should take the guardianship, he only consented on condition that my uncle should be joined with him; so now my uncle is alone in the trust, and I cannot help thinking something must have happened at Redclyffe. It is certainly not Sir Guy's writing."

"It must wait, unless your curiosity will carry you out in search of papa," said Charles; "he is somewhere about zealously supplying the place of Jenkins."

"Really, Philip," said Laura, "there is no telling how much good you have done him by convincing him of Jenkins's dishonesty. To say nothing of the benefit of being no longer cheated, the pleasure of having to overlook the farm is untold."

Philip smiled, and came to the table where she was drawing. "Do you know this place?" said she, looking up in his face."

"Stylehurst itself! What is it taken from?"

"From this pencil sketch of your sister's, which I found in mamma's scrap-book."

"You are making it very like, only the spire is too slender, and that tree—can't you alter the foliage?—it is an ash."

"Is it? I took it for an elm."

"And surely those trees in the foreground should be greener, to throw back the middle distance. That is the peak of South Moor exactly, if it looked further off."

She began the alterations, while Philip stood watching her progress, a shade of melancholy gathering on his face. Suddenly a voice called "Laura! Are you there? Open the door, and you will see."

On Philip's opening it, in came a tall camellia; the laughing face and light shining curls of the bearer peeping through the dark green leaves.

"Thank you! Oh, is it you, Philip? Oh, don't take it. I must bring my own camellia to show Charlie."

"You make the most of that one flower," said Charles.

"Only see how many buds!" and she placed it by his sofa. "Is it not a perfect blossom, so pure a white, and

so regular! And I am so proud of having beaten mamma and all the gardeners, for not another will be out this fortnight; and this is to go to the horticultural show. Sam would hardly trust me to bring it in, though it was my nursing, not his."

"Now, Amy," said Philip, when the flower had been duly admired, "you must let me put it into the window for you. It is too heavy for you."

"Oh, take care," cried Amabel, but too late; for, as he took it from her, the solitary flower stuck against Charles's little table, and was broken off.

"O Amy, I am very sorry. What a pity! How did it happen?"

"Never mind," she answered; "it will last a long time in water."

"It was very unlucky—I am very sorry—especially because of the horticultural show."

"Make all your apologies to Sam," said Amy, "his feelings will be more hurt than mine. I dare say my poor flower would have caught cold at the show, and never held up its head again."

Her tone was gay; but Charles, who saw her face in the glass, betrayed her by saying, "Winking away a tear, O Amy!"

"I never nursed a dear gazelle!" quoted Amy, with a merry laugh; and before any more could be said, there entered a middle-aged gentleman, short and slight, with a fresh, weather-beaten good-natured face, grey whiskers, quick eyes, and a hasty, undecided air in look and movement. He greeted Philip heartily, and the letter was given to him.

"Ha! Eh? Let us look. Not old Sir Guy's hand. Eh? What can be the matter? What? Dead! This is a sudden thing."

"Dead! Who? Sir Guy Morville?"

"Yes, quite suddenly—poor old man." Then stepping to the door, he opened it, and called, "Mamma! just step here a minute, will you, mamma!"

The summons was obeyed by a tall, handsome lady, and behind her crept, with doubtful steps, as if she knew not how far to venture, a little girl of eleven, her turned-up nose and shrewd face full of curiosity. She darted up to Amabel; who, though she shook her head, and held up her finger, smiled. and took the little girl's hand, listening meanwhile to

the announcement, "Do you hear this, mamma? Here's a shocking thing! Sir Guy Morville dead, quite suddenly."

"Indeed! Well, poor man, I suppose no one ever repented or suffered more than he. Who writes?"

"His grandson—poor boy! I can hardly make out his letter." Holding it half a yard from his eyes, so that all could see a few lines of hasty, irregular writing, in a forcible hand, bearing marks of having been penned under great distress and agitation, he read aloud:—

"Dear Mr. Edmonstone,—My dear grandfather died at six this morning. He had an attack of apoplexy yesterday evening, and never spoke again, though for a short time he knew me. We hope he suffered little. Markham will make all arrangements. We propose that the funeral should take place on Tuesday; I hope you will be able to come. I would write to my cousin, Philip Morville, if I knew his address; but I depend on you for saying all that ought to be said. Excuse this illegible letter,—I hardly know what I write.

"Yours very sincerely,
"Guy Morville."

"Poor fellow!" said Philip, "he writes with a great deal of proper feeling."

"How very sad for him to be left alone there!" said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"Very sad—very," said her husband. "I must start off to him at once—yes, at once. Should you not say so, eh! Philip?"

"Certainly. I think I had better go with you. It would be the correct thing, and I should not like to fail in any token of respect for poor old Sir Guy."

"Of course—of course," said Mr. Edmonstone; "it would be the correct thing. I am sure he was always very civil to us, and you know you are next heir after this boy."

Little Charlotte made a sort of jump, lifted her eyebrows, and stared at Amabel.

Philip answered. "That is not worth a thought; but since he and I are now the only representatives of the two branches of the house of Morville, it shall not be my fault if the enmity is not forgotten."

"Buried in oblivion, would sound more magnanimous," said Charles, at which Amabel laughed so uncontrollably that

she was forced to hide her face on her little sister's shoulder Charlotte laughed too, an imprudent proceeding, as it attracted attention. Her father smiled, saying, half-reprovingly,—" So you are there, inquisitive pussy-cat?" And at her mother's question,—" Charlotte, what business have you here?" she stole back to her lessons, looking very small, without the satisfaction of hearing her mother's compassionate words,—" Poor child!"

" How old is he?" asked Mr. Edmonstone, returning to the former subject.

" He is of the same age as Laura—seventeen and a half," answered Mrs. Edmonstone. " Don't you remember my brother saying what a satisfaction it was to see such a noble baby as she was, after such a poor, little miserable thing as the one at Redclyffe?"

" He is grown into a fine, spirited fellow," said Philip.

" I suppose we must have him here," said Mr. Edmon stone. " Should you not say so—eh, Philip?"

" Certainly; I should think it very good for him. Indeed, his grandfather's death has happened at a most favourable time for him. The poor old man had such a dread of his going wrong that he kept him ——"

" I know—as tight as a drum."

" With strictness that I should think very bad for a boy of his impatient temper. It would have been a very dangerous experiment to send him at once among the temptations of Oxford, after such discipline and solitude as he has been used to."

" Don't talk of it," interrupted Mr. Edmonstone, spreading out his hands in a deprecating manner. " We must do the best we can with him, for I have got him on my hands till he is five-and-twenty; his grandfather has tied him up till then. If we can keep him out of mischief, well and good; if not, it can't be helped."

" You have him all to yourself," said Charles.

" Ay, to my sorrow. If your poor father was alive, Philip, I should be free of all care. I've a pretty deal on my hands," he proceeded, looking more important than troubled. " All that great Redclyffe estate is no sinecure, to say nothing of the youth himself. If all the world will come to me, I can't help it. I must go and speak to the men, if I am to be off to Redclyffe to-morrow. Will you come, Philip?"

"I must go back soon, thank you," replied Philip. "I must see about my leave; only we should first settle when to set off."

This arranged, Mr. Edmonstone hurried away, and Charles began by saying, "Isn't there a ghost at Redclyffe?"

"So it is said," answered his cousin; "though I don't think it is certain whose it is. There is a room called Sir Hugh's Chamber, over the gateway, but the honour of naming it is undecided between Hugh de Morville, who murdered Thomas à Becket, and his namesake, the first baronet, who lived in the time of William of Orange, when the quarrel began with our branch of the family. Do you know the history of it, aunt?"

"It was about some property," said Mrs. Edmonstone, "though I don't know the rights of it. But the Morvilles were always a fiery, violent race, and the enmity once begun between Sir Hugh and his brother, was kept up, generation after generation, in a most unjustifiable way. Even I can remember when the Morvilles of Redclyffe used to be spoken of in our family like a sort of ogres."

"Not undeservedly, I should think," said Philip. "This poor old man who is just dead, ran a strange career. Stories of his duel and mad freaks are still extant."

"Poor man! I believe he went all lengths," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"What was the true version of that horrible story about his son?" said Philip. "Did he strike him?"

"Oh, no! it was bad enough without that!"

"How?" asked Laura.

"He was the only child, and lost his mother early. He was very ill brought up, and was as impetuous and violent as Sir Guy himself, though with much kindliness and generosity. He was only nineteen when he made a runaway marriage with a girl of sixteen, the sister of a violin-player who was at that time in fashion. His father was very much offended, and there was much dreadfully violent conduct on each side. At last, the young man was driven to seek a reconciliation. He brought his wife to Moorworth, and rode to Redclyffe, to have an interview with his father. Unhappily, Sir Guy was giving a dinner to the hunt, and had been drinking. He not only refused to see him, but I am afraid he used shocking language, and said something about bidding him go back to

his fiddling brother-in-law. The son was waiting in the hall, heard every thing, threw himself on his horse, and rushed away in the dark. His forehead struck against the branch of a tree, and he was killed on the spot."

"The poor wife?" asked Amabel, shuddering

"She died the next day, when this boy was born."

"Frightful!" said Philip. "It might well make a reformation in old Sir Guy."

"I have heard that nothing could be more awful than the stillness that fell on that wretched party, even before they knew what had happened—before Colonel Harewood, who had been called aside by the servants, could resolve to come and fetch away the father. No wonder Sir Guy was a changed man from that hour."

"It was then that he sent for my father," said Philip. "But what made him think of doing so?"

"You know Colonel Harewood's house at Stylehurst? Many years ago, when the St. Mildred's races used to be so much more in fashion, Sir Guy and Colonel Harewood, and some men of that stamp, took that house amongst them, and used to spend some time there every year, to attend to something about the training of the horses. There were some malpractices of their servants, that did so much harm in the parish, that my brother was obliged to remonstrate. Sir Guy was very angry at first, but behaved better at last than any of the others. I suspect he was struck by my dear brother's bold, uncompromising ways, for he took to him to a certain degree—and my brother could not help being interested in him, there seemed to be so much goodness in his nature. I saw him once, and never did I meet any one who gave me so much the idea of a finished gentleman. When the poor son was about fourteen, he was with a tutor in the neighbourhood, and used to be a good deal at Stylehurst, and, after the unhappy marriage, my brother happened to meet him in London, heard his story, and tried to bring about a reconciliation."

"Ha!" said Philip; "did not they come to Stylehurst? I have a dim recollection of somebody very tall and a lady who sung."

"Yes; your father asked them to stay there, that he might judge of her, and wrote to Sir Guy that she was a little, gentle, childish thing, capable of being moulded to any

thing, and representing the mischief of leaving them to such society as that of her brother, who was actually maintaining them. That letter was never answered; but about ten days or a fortnight after this terrible accident, Colonel Harewood wrote to entreat my brother to come to Redclyffe, saying poor Sir Guy had eagerly caught at the mention of his name. Of course he went at once, and he told me that he never, in all his experience as a clergyman, saw any one so completely broken down with grief."

"I found a great many of his letters among my father's papers," said Philip; "and it was a very touching one that he wrote to me on my father's death. Those Redclyffe people certainly have great force of character."

"And was it then he settled his property on my uncle?" said Charles.

"Yes," said Mrs. Edmonstone. "My brother did not like his doing so, but he would not be at rest till it was settled. It was in vain to put him in mind of his grandchild, for he would not believe it could live; and, indeed, its life hung on a thread. I remember my brother telling me how he went to Moorworth to see it—for it could not be brought home—in hopes of bringing back a report that might cheer its grandfather, but how he found it so weak and delicate that he did not dare to try to make him take interest in it. It was not till the child was two or three years old, that Sir Guy ventured to let himself grow fond of it."

"Sir Guy was a very striking person," said Philip; "I shall not easily forget my visit to Redclyffe four years ago. It was more like a scene in a romance than any thing real. The fine old red sandstone house, crumbling away in the exposed parts; the arched gateway covered with ivy; the great quadrangle where the sun never shone, and full of echoes; the large hall, and black wainscoted rooms, which the candles never would light up. It is a fit place to be haunted."

"That poor boy alone there!" said Mrs. Edmonstone; "I am glad you and your uncle are going to him."

"Tell us about him," said Laura.

"He was the most incongruous thing there," said Philip "There was a calm, deep melancholy about the old man added to the grand courtesy which showed he had been what old books call a fine gentleman, that made him suit his house

as a hermit does his cell, or a knight his castle; but breaking in on this *penseroso* scene, there was Guy ——"

"In what way?" asked Laura.

"Always in wild spirits, rushing about, playing antics, provoking those solemn echoes with shouting, whooping, singing, whistling. There was something in that whistle of his that always made me angry!"

"How did this suit old Sir Guy?"

"It was curious to see how Guy could rattle on to him, pour out the whole history of his doings, laughing, rubbing his hands, springing about with animation—all with as little answer as if he had been talking to a statue."

"Do you mean that Sir Guy did not like it?"

"He did, in his own way. There was now and then a glance or a nod, to show that he was attending; but it was such slight encouragement that any less buoyant spirits must have been checked."

"Did you like him, on the whole?" asked Laura. "I hope he has not this tremendous Morville temper? Oh, you don't say so. What a grievous thing!"

"He is a fine fellow," said Philip; "but I did not think Sir Guy managed him well. Poor old man, he was quite wrapt up in him, and only thought how to keep him out of harm's way. He would never let him be with other boys, and kept him so fettered by rules, so strictly watched, and so sternly called to account, that I cannot think how any boy could stand it."

"Yet, you say, he told every thing freely to his grandfather," said Amy.

"Yes," added her mother, "I was going to say that, as long as that went on, I should think all safe."

"As I said before," resumed Philip, "he has a great deal of frankness, much of the making of a fine character; but he is a thorough Morville. I remember something that will show you his best and worst sides. You know Redclyffe is a beautiful place, with magnificent cliffs overhanging the sea, and fine woods crowning them. On one of the most inaccessible of these crags there was a hawk's nest, about half way down, so that looking from the top of the precipice, we could see the old birds fly in and out. Well, what does Master Guy do, but go down this headlong descent after the nest. How he escaped alive no one could guess; and

his grandfather could not bear to look at the place afterwards —but climb it he did, and came back with two young hawks, buttoned up inside his jacket."

"There's a regular brick for you!" cried Charles, delighted.

"His heart was set on training these birds. He turned the library upside down in search of books on falconry, and spent every spare moment on them. At last, a servant left some door open, and they escaped. I shall never forget Guy's passion; I am sure I don't exaggerate when I say he was perfectly beside himself with anger."

"Poor boy!" said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"Served the rascal right," said Charles.

"Nothing had any effect on him till his grandfather came out, and, at the sight of him, he was tamed in an instant, hung his head, came up to his grandfather, and said—'I am very sorry.' Sir Guy answered, 'My poor boy,' and there was not another word. I saw Guy no more that day, and all the next he was quiet and subdued. But the most remarkable part of the story is to come. A couple of days afterwards, we were walking in the woods, when, at the sound of Guy's whistle, we heard a flapping and rustling, and beheld, tumbling along, with their clipped wings, these two identical hawks, very glad to be caught. They drew themselves up proudly for him to stroke them, and their yellow eyes looked at him with positive affection."

"Pretty creatures!" said Amabel. "That is a very nice end to the story."

"It is not the end," said Philip. "I was surprised to see Guy so sober, instead of going into one of his usual raptures. He took them home; but the first thing I heard in the morning was, that he was gone to offer them to a farmer, to keep the birds from his fruit."

"Did he do it of his own accord?" asked Laura.

"That was just what I wanted to know; but any hint about them brought such a cloud over his face that I thought it would be wanton to irritate him by questions. However, I must be going. Good-bye, Amy, I hope you camellia will have another blossom before I come back. At least, I shall escape the horticultural meeting."

"Good-bye," said Charles. "Put the feud in your pocket till you can bury it in old Sir Guy's grave, unless you mean

to fight it out with his grandson, which would be more romantic and exciting."

Philip was gone before he could finish. Mrs. Edmonstone looked annoyed, and Laura said, "Charlie, I wish you would not let your spirits carry you away."

"I wish I had any thing else to carry me away!" was the reply.

"Yes," said his mother, looking sadly at him. "Your high spirits are a blessing, but why misuse them? If they are given to support you through pain and confinement, why make mischief with them?"

Charles looked more impatient than abashed, and the compunction seemed chiefly to rest with Amabel.

"Now," said Mrs. Edmonstone, "I must go and see after my poor little prisoner."

"Ah!" said Laura, as she went, "it was no kindness in you to encourage Charlotte to stay, when you know how often that inquisitive temper has got her into scrapes."

"I suppose so," said Amy regretfully; "but I had not the heart to send her away."

"That is just what Philip says, that you only want bones and sinews in your character to ——"

"Come, Laura," interrupted Charles, "I won't hear Philip's criticisms of my sisters. I had rather she had no bones at all, than that they stuck out and ran into me. There are plenty of angles already in the world, without sharpening hers."

He possessed himself of Amy's round, plump, childish hand, and spread out over it his still whiter, and very bony fingers, pinching her "soft pinky cushions," as he called them, "not meant for studying anatomy upon."

"Ah! you two spoil each other sadly," said Laura, smiling, as she left the room.

"And what do Philip and Laura do to each other?" said Charles.

"Improve each other, I suppose," said Amabel in a shy simple tone, at which Charles laughed heartily.

"I wish I was as sensible as Laura!" said she, presently, with a sigh.

"Never was a more absurd wish," said Charles, tormenting her hand still more, and pulling her curls; "unwish it forthwith. Where should I be without silly little Amy? If

every one weighed my wit before laughing, I should not often be in disgrace for my high spirits, as they call them."

"I am so little younger than Laura," said Amy, still sadly, though smiling.

"Folly," said Charles; "you are quite wise enough for your age, while Laura is so prematurely wise, that I am in constant dread that nature will take her revenge by causing her to do something strikingly foolish!"

"Nonsense!" cried Amy, indignantly. "Laura do any thing foolish!"

"What I should enjoy," proceeded Charles, "would be to see her over head and ears in love with this hero, and Philip properly jealous."

"How can you say such things, Charlie?"

"Why? was there ever a beauty who did not fall in love with her father's ward?"

"Yes; but she ought to live alone with her very old father and horribly grim maiden aunt."

"Very well, Amy, you shall be the maiden aunt." And as Laura returned at that moment, he announced to her that they had been agreeing that no hero ever failed to fall in love with his guardian's beautiful daughter.

"If his guardian had a beautiful daughter," said Laura, resolved not to be disconcerted.

"Did you ever hear such barefaced fishing for compliments?" said Charles; but Amabel, who did not like her sister to be teased, and was also conscious of having wasted a good deal of time, sat down to practise. Laura returned to her drawing; and Charles, with a yawn, listlessly turned over a newspaper, while his fair delicate features, which would have been handsome but that they were blanched, sharpened, and worn with pain, gradually lost their animated and rather satirical expression, and assumed an air of weariness and discontent.

Charles was at this time nineteen, and for the last ten years had been afflicted with a disease in the hip-joint, which, in spite of the most anxious care, caused him frequent and severe suffering, and had occasioned such a contraction of the limb as to cripple him completely, while his general health was so much affected as to render him an object of constant anxiety. His mother had always been his most devoted and indefatigable nurse, giving up every thing for his sake, and

watching him night and day. His father attended to his least caprice, and his sisters were, of course, his slaves; so that he was the undisputed sovereign of the whole family.

The two elder girls had been entirely under a governess till a month or two before the opening of our story, when Laura was old enough to be introduced; and the governess departing, the two sisters became Charles's companions in the drawing-room, while Mrs. Edmonstone, who had a peculiar taste and talent for teaching, undertook little Charlotte's lessons herself.

CHAPTER II.

> If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
> Good things will strive to dwell with't.
>
> THE TEMPEST.

ONE of the pleasantest rooms at Hollywell was Mrs. Edmonstone's dressing-room—large and baywindowed, over the drawing-room, having little of the dressing-room but the name, and a toilet-table with a black and gold japanned glass, and curiously shaped boxes to match; her room opened into it on one side, and Charles's on the other; it was a sort of upstairs parlour, where she taught Charlotte, cast up accounts, spoke to servants, and wrote notes, and where Charles was usually to be found, when unequal to coming down stairs. It had an air of great snugness, with its large folding-screen, covered with prints and caricatures of ancient date, its bookshelves, its tables, its peculiarly easy arm-chairs, the great invalid sofa, and the grate, which always lighted up better than any other in the house.

In the bright glow of the fire, with the shutters closed and curtains drawn, lay Charles on his couch, one Monday evening, in a gorgeous dressing-gown of a Chinese pattern, all over pagodas, while little Charlotte sat opposite to him, curled up on a foot-stool. He was not always very civil to Charlotte; she sometimes came into collision with him, for she, too, was a pet, and had a will of her own, and at other times she could bore him; but just now they had a common interest, and he was gracious.

"It is striking six, so they must soon be here. I wish mamma would let me go down; but I must wait till after dinner."

"Then, Charlotte, as soon as you come in, hold up your

hands, and exclaim, 'What a guy!' There will be a compliment!"

"No, Charlie; I promised mamma and Laura that you should get me into no more scrapes."

"Did you? The next promise you make had better depend upon yourself alone."

"But Amy said I must be quiet, because poor Sir Guy will be too sorrowful to like a racket; and when Amy tells me to be quiet, I know that I must indeed."

"Most true," said Charles, laughing.

"Do you think you shall like Sir Guy?"

"I shall be able to determine," said Charles, sententiously, "when I have seen whether he brushes his hair to the right or left."

"Philip brushes his to the left."

"Then, undoubtedly, Sir Guy will brush his to the right."

"Is there not some horrid story about those Morvilles of Redclyffe?" asked Charlotte. "I asked Laura, and she told me not to be curious, so I knew there was something in it; and then I asked Amy, and she said it would be no pleasure to me to know."

"Ah! I would have you prepared."

"Why, what is it? Oh! dear Charlie! are you really going to tell me?"

"Did you ever hear of a deadly feud?"

"I have read of them in the history of Scotland. They went on hating and killing each other for ever. There was one man who made his enemy's children eat out of a pig trough, and another who cut off his head—"

"His own?"

"No, his enemy's, and put it on the table, at breakfast, with a piece of bread in its mouth."

"Very well; whenever Sir Guy serves up Philip's head at breakfast, with a piece of bread in his mouth, let me know."

Charlotte started up. "Charles, what do you mean? Such things don't happen now."

"Nevertheless, there is a deadly feud between the two branches of the house of Morville."

"But it is very wrong," said Charlotte, looking frightened.

"Wrong? Of course it is."

"Philip won't do any thing wrong. But how will they ever get on?"

"Don't you see? It must be our serious endeavour to keep the peace, and prevent occasions of discord."

"Do you think any thing will happen?"

"It is much to be apprehended," said Charles, solemnly.

At that moment the sound of wheels was heard, and Charlotte flew off to her private post of observation, leaving her brother delighted at having mystified her. She returned on tip-toe. "Papa and Sir Guy are come, but not Philip; I can't see him any where."

"Ah! you have not looked in Sir Guy's great coat pocket."

"I wish you would not plague me so! You are not in earnest?"

The pettish, inquiring tone was exactly what delighted him, and he continued to tease her in the same style till Laura and Amabel came running in with their report of the stranger.

"He is come!" they cried, with one voice.

"Very gentlemanlike!" said Laura.

"Very pleasant looking," said Amy. "Such fine eyes!"

"And so much expression," said Laura. "Oh!"

The exclamation, and the start which accompanied it, were caused by hearing her father's voice close to the door, which had been left partly open. "Here is poor Charles," it said; "come in and see him; get over the first introduction —eh, Guy?" And before he had finished, both he and the guest were in the room, and Charlotte full of mischievous glee at her sister's confusion.

"Well, Charlie boy, how goes it?" was his father's greeting. "Better, eh? Sorry not to find you down stairs, but I nave brought Guy to see you." Then, as Charles sat up and shook hands with Sir Guy, he continued—"A fine chance for you, as I was telling him, to have a companion always at hand; a fine chance?—eh, Charlie?"

"I am not so unreasonable as to expect any one to be aiways at hand," said Charles, smiling, as he looked up at the frank open face and lustrous hazel eyes turned on him with compassion at the sight of his crippled, helpless figure, and with a bright cordial promise of kindness.

As he spoke, a pattering sound approached, the door was pushed open, and while Sir Guy exclaimed, "O, Bustle! Bustle! I am very sorry," there suddenly appeared a large beautiful spaniel, with a long silky black and white coat, jetty curled ears, tan spots above his intelligent eyes, and tan legs,

fringed with silken waves of hair. There he stood, wagging his tail at having found his master, but crouching and looking beseeching at meeting no welcome, while Sir Guy seemed much distressed at his intrusion.

"O you beauty!" cried Charles. "Come here, you fine fellow."

Bustle only looked wistfully at his master, and moved nothing but his feather of a tail.

"Ah! I was afraid you would repent of your kindness," said Sir Guy to Mr. Edmonstone.

"Not at all, not at all!" was the answer; "mamma never objects to indoor pets, eh, Amy?"

"A tender subject, papa," said Laura; "poor Pepper!"

Amy, ashamed of her disposition to cry at the remembrance of the dear departed rough terrier, bent down to hide her glowing face, and held out her hand to the dog, which at last ventured to advance, still creeping with his body curved till his tail was foremost, looking imploringly at his master, as if to entreat his pardon.

"Are you sure you don't dislike it?" inquired Sir Guy, of Charles.

"I! O no. Here, you fine creature."

"Come, then, behave like a rational dog, since you are come," said Sir Guy; and Bustle, resuming the deportment of a spirited and well-bred spaniel, no longer crouched and curled himself into the shape of a comma, but bounded, wagged his tail, thrust his nose into his master's hand, and then proceeded to reconnoitre the rest of the company, paying especial attention to Charles, putting his fore paws on the sofa, and rearing himself up to contemplate him, with a grave, polite curiosity that was very diverting.

"Well, old fellow," said Charles, "did you ever see the like of such a dressing-gown? Are you satisfied? Give me your paw, and let us swear an eternal friendship."

"I am quite glad to see a dog in the house again," said Laura; and after a few more compliments, Bustle and his master followed Mr. Edmonstone out of the room.

"One of my father's well-judged proceedings," murmured Charles. "That poor fellow had rather have gone a dozen miles further than have been lugged in here! Really, if papa chooses to inflict such dressing-gowns on me, he should give

me notice before he brings men and dogs to make me their laughing-stock!"

"An unlucky moment," said Laura. "Will my cheeks ever cool?"

"Perhaps he did not hear," said Amabel, consolingly.

"You did not ask about Philip," said Charlotte, with great earnestness.

"He is staying at Thorndale, and then going to St. Mildred's," said Laura.

"I hope you are relieved," said her brother; and she looked in doubt whether she ought to laugh.

"And what do you think of Sir Guy?"

"May he only be worthy of his dog!" replied Charles.

"Ah!" said Laura, "many men are neither worthy of their wives nor of their dogs."

"Dr. Henley, I suppose, is the foundation of that aphorism," said Charles.

"If Margaret Morville could marry him, she could hardly be too worthy," said Laura. "Think of throwing away Philip's whole soul!"

"O Laura, she could not lose that," said Amabel.

Laura looked as if she knew more, but at that moment both her father and mother entered, the former rubbing his hands, as he always did when much pleased, and sending his voice before him, as he exclaimed, "Well, Charlie, well, young ladies, is not he a fine fellow—eh?"

"Rather under-sized," said Charles.

"Eh? He'll grow. He is not eighteen, you know; plenty of time; a very good height; you can't expect every one to be as tall as Philip; but he is a capital fellow. And how have you been—any pain?"

"Hem—rather," said Charles, shortly, for he hated answering kind inquiries, when out of humour.

"Ah, that's a pity; I was sorry not to find you in the drawing-room, but I thought you would have liked just to see him," said Mr. Edmonstone, disappointed and apologizing.

"I had rather have had some notice of your intention," said Charles; "I would have made myself fit to be seen."

"I am sorry. I thought you would have liked his coming," said poor Mr. Edmonstone, only half conscious of his offence; "but I see you are not well this evening."

Worse and worse, for it was equivalent to openly telling

Charles he was out of humour; and seeing, as he did, his mother's motive, he was still further annoyed when she hastily interposed a question about Sir Guy.

"You should only hear them talk about him at Redclyffe," said Mr. Edmonstone. "No one ever was equal to him, according to them. Every one said the same—clergyman, old Markham, all of them. Such attention to his grandfather, such proper feeling, so good-natured, not a bit of pride—it is my firm belief that he will make up for all his family before him."

Charles set up his eyebrows sarcastically.

"How does he get on with Philip?" inquired Laura.

"Excellently. Just what could be wished. Philip is delighted with him; and I have been telling Guy all the way home what a capital friend he will be, and he is quite inclined to look up to him." Charles made an exaggerated gesture of astonishment, unseen by his father. "I told him to bring his dog. He would have left it, but they seemed so fond of each other, I thought it was a pity to part them, and that I could promise it should be welcome here; eh, mamma?"

"Certainly. I am very glad you brought it."

"We are to have his horse and man in a little while. A beautiful chestnut—any thing to raise his spirits. He is terribly cut up about his grandfather."

It was now time to go down to dinner; and after Charles had made faces of weariness and disgust at all the viands proposed to him by his mother, almost imploring him to like them, and had at last ungraciously given her leave to send what he could not quite say he disliked, he was left to carry on his teasing of Charlotte, and his grumbling over the dinner, for about the space of an hour, when Amabel came back to him, and Charlotte went down.

"Hum!" he exclaimed. "Another swan of my father's."

"Did you not like his looks?"

"I saw only an angular hobbetyhoy."

"But every one at Redclyffe speaks so well of him."

"As if the same things were not said of every heir to more acres than brains! However, I could have swallowed every thing but the disposition to adore Philip. Either it was gammon on his part, or else the work of my father's imagination."

"For shame, Charlie."

"Is it within the bounds of probability that he should be willing, at the bidding of his guardian, to adopt as Mentor his very correct and sententious cousin, a poor subaltern, and the next in the entail! Depend upon it, it is a fiction created either by papa's hopes or Philip's self-complacency, or else the unfortunate youth must have been brought very low by straight-lacing and milk and water."

"Mr. Thorndale is willing to look up to Philip."

"I don't think the Thorndale swan very—very much better than a tame goose," said Charles; "but the coalition is not so monstrous in his case, since Philip was a friend of his own picking and choosing, and so his father's adoption did not succeed in repelling him. But that Morville should receive this 'young man's companion,' on the word of a guardian whom he never set eyes on before, is too incredible—utterly mythical, I assure you, Amy. And how did you get on at dinner?"

"O the dog is the most delightful creature I ever saw, so sensible and well-mannered."

"It was of the man that I asked."

"He said hardly any thing, and sometimes started if papa spoke to him suddenly. He winced as if he could not bear to be called Sir Guy, so papa said we should call him by his name, if he would do the same by us. I am glad of it, for it seems more friendly, and I am sure he wants to be comforted."

"Don't waste your compassion, my dear; few men need it less. With his property, those moors to shoot over, his own master, and with health to enjoy it, there are plenty who would change with him, for all your pity, my silly little Amy."

"Surely not, with that horrible ancestry."

"All very well to plume oneself upon. I rather covet that ghost myself."

"Well, if you watched his face, I think you would be sorry for him."

"I am tired of the sound of his name! One fifth of November is enough in the year. Here, find something to read to me among that trumpery."

Amy read till she was summoned to tea, when she found a conversation going on about Philip, on whose history Sir Guy did not seem fully informed. Philip was the son

of Archdeacon Morville, Mrs. Edmonstone's brother, an admirable and superior man, who had been dead about five years. He left three children, Margaret and Fanny, twenty five and twenty-three years of age, and Philip, just seventeen. The boy was at the head of his school, highly distinguished for application and good conduct; he had attained every honour there open to him, won golden opinions from all concerned with him, and made proof of talents which could not have failed to raise him to the highest university distinctions. He was absent from home at the time of his father's death, which took place after so short an illness that there had been no time to summon him back to Stylehurst. Very little property was left to be divided among the three; and as soon as Philip perceived how small was the provision for his sisters, he gave up his hopes of university honours, and obtained a commission in the army.

On hearing this, Sir Guy started forward, "Noble!" he cried, "and yet what a pity! If my grandfather had but known it ——"

"Ah! I was convinced of *that*," broke in Mr. Edmonstone, "and so I am sure was Philip himself; but in fact he knew we should never have given our consent, so he acted quite by himself, wrote to Lord Thorndale, and never said a word, even to his sisters, till the thing was done. I never was more surprised in my life."

"One would almost envy him the opportunity of making such a sacrifice," said Sir Guy, "yet one must lament it."

"It was done in a hasty spirit of independence," said Mrs. Edmonstone; "I believe if he had got a fellowship at Oxford, it would have answered much better."

"And now that poor Fanny is dead, and Margaret married, there is all his expensive education thrown away, and all for nothing," said Mr. Edmonstone.

"Ah," said Mrs. Edmonstone, "he planned for them to go on living at Stylehurst, so that it would still have been his home. It is a great pity, for his talent is thrown away, and he is not fond of his profession."

"You must not suppose, though, that he is not a practical man," said Mr. Edmonstone; "I had rather take his opinion than any one's, especially about a horse, and there is no end to what I hear about his good sense, and the use he is of to the other young men."

"You should tell about Mr. Thorndale, papa," said Laura.

"Ah! that is a feather in master Philip's cap; besides, he is your neighbour, at least—his father is."

"I suppose you know Lord Thorndale?" said Mrs. Edmonstone, in explanation.

"I have seen him once at the Quarter Sessions," said Sir Guy; "but he lives on the other side Moorworth, and there was no visiting."

"Well, this youth, James Thorndale, the second son, was Philip's fag."

"Philip says he was always licking him!" interposed Charlotte.

"He kept him out of some scrape or other," continued Mr. Edmonstone. "Lord Thorndale was very much obliged to him, had him to stay at his house, took pretty much to him altogether. It was through him that Philip applied for his commission, and he has put his son into the same regiment, on purpose to have him under Philip's eye. There he is at Broadstone, as gentlemanlike a youth as I would wish to see. We will have him to dinner some day, and Maurice, too—eh, mamma? Maurice—he is a young Irish cousin of my own, a capital fellow at the bottom, but a regular thoroughgoing rattle. That was my doing. I told his father that he could not do better than put him into the —th. Nothing like a steady friend and a good example, I said, and Kilcoran always takes my advice, and I don't think he has been sorry. Maurice has kept much more out of scrapes of late."

"O papa," exclaimed Charlotte, "Maurice has been out riding on a hired horse, racing with Mr. Gordon, and the horse tumbled down at the bottom of East-hill, and broke its knees."

"That's the way," said Mr. Edmonstone, "the instant my back is turned."

Thereupon the family fell into a discussion of home affairs, and thought little more of their silent guest.

CHAPTER III.

The hues of bliss more brightly glow
Chastised by sober tints of woe.

GRAY.

"WHAT use shall I make of him?" said Charles to himself, as he studied Sir Guy Morville, who sat by the table, with a book in his hand.

He had the unformed look of a growing boy, and was so slender as to appear taller than he really was. He had an air of great activity; and though he sat leaning back, there was no lounging in his attitude, and at the first summons, he roused up with an air of alert attention that recalled to mind the eager head of a listening greyhound. He had no pretension to be called handsome; his eyes were his best feature; they were very peculiar, of a light hazel, darker towards the outside of the iris, very brilliant, the whites tinted with blue, and the lashes uncommonly thick and black; the eyebrows were also very dark, and of a sharply-defined, angular shape, but the hair was much lighter, loose, soft, and wavy; the natural fairness of the complexion was shown by the whiteness of the upper part of the forehead, though the rest of the face, as well as the small taper hands, were tanned by sunshine and sea-breezes, into a fresh, hardy brown, glowing with red on the cheeks.

"What use shall I make of him?" proceeded Charles's thoughts. "He won't be worth his salt if he goes on in this way; he has got a graver specimen of literature there than I ever saw Philip himself read on a week-day; he has been puritanized till he is good for nothing; I'll trouble myself no more about him!" He tried to read, but presently looked up again. "Plague! I can't keep my thoughts off him

That sober look does not sit on that sun-burnt face as if it were native to it; those eyes don't look as if the Redclyffe spirit was extinguished."

Mrs. Edmondstone came in, and, looking round, as if to find some occupation for her guest, at length devised setting him to play at chess with Charles. Charles gave her an amiable look, expressing that neither liked it; but she was pretty well used to doing him good against his will, and trusted to its coming right in time.

Charles was a capital chess-player, and seldom found any one who could play well enough to afford him much real sport, but he found Sir Guy more nearly a match than often fell to his lot; it was a bold dashing game, that obliged him to be on his guard, and he was once so taken by surprise as to be absolutely check-mated. His ill-humour evaporated, he was delighted to find an opponent worth playing with, and thenceforth there were games almost every morning or even ing, though Sir Guy seemed not to care much about them, except for the sake of pleasing him.

When left to himself, Guy spent his time in reading or in walking about the lanes alone. He used to sit in the bay window of the drawing-room with his book; but sometimes, when they least expected it, the girls would find his quick eyes following them with an air of amused curiosity, as Amabel waited on Charles and her flowers, or Laura drew, wrote letters, and strove to keep down the piles of books and periodicals under which it seemed as if her brother might some day be stifled—a vain task, for he was sure to want immediately whatever she put out of his reach.

Laura and Amabel both played and sung, the former remarkably well, and the first time they had any music after the arrival of Sir Guy, his look of delighted attention struck every one. He ventured nearer, stood by the piano when they practised, and at last joined in with a few notes of so full and melodious a voice, that Laura turned round in surprise, exclaiming, "You sing better than any of us!"

He coloured. "I beg your pardon," he said, "I could not help it; I know nothing of music."

"Really!" said Laura, smiling incredulously.

"I don't even know the notes."

"Then you must have a very good ear. Let us try again."

The sisters were again charmed and surprised, and Guy looked gratified, as people do at the discovery of a faculty which they are particularly glad to possess. It was the first time he appeared to brighten, and Laura and her mother agreed that it would do him good to have plenty of music and to try to train that fine voice. He was beginning to interest them all greatly by his great helpfulness and kindness to Charles, as he learnt the sort of assistance he required, as well as by the silent grief that showed how much attached he must have been to his grandfather.

On the first Sunday, Mrs. Edmonstone, coming into the drawing-room at about half-past five, found him sitting alone by the fire, his dog lying at his feet. As he started up, she asked if he had been here in the dark ever since church time?

"I have not wanted light," he answered with a sigh, long, deep, and irrepressible, and as she stirred the fire, the flame revealed to her the traces of tears. She longed to comfort him, and said—

"This Sunday twilight is a quiet time for thinking."

"Yes," he said, "how few Sundays ago—" and there he paused.

"Ah! you had so little preparation."

"None. That very morning he had done business with Markham, and had never been more clear and collected."

"Were you with him when he was taken ill?" asked Mrs. Edmonstone, perceiving that it would be a relief to him to talk.

"No; it was just before dinner. I had been shooting, and went into the library to tell him where I had been. He was well then, for he spoke, but it was getting dark, and I did not see his face. I don't think I was ten minutes dressing, but when I came down, he had sunk back in his chair. I saw it was not sleep—I rang—and when Arnaud came, we knew how it was." His voice became low with strong emotion.

"Did he recover his consciousness?"

"Yes, that was *the* comfort," said Guy, eagerly. "It was after he had been bled that he seemed to wake up. He could not speak or move, but he looked at me—or—I don't know what I should have done." The last words were almost inaudible from the gush of tears that he vainly struggled to repress, and he was turning away to hide them, when he saw that Mrs. Edmonstone's were flowing fast.

"You had great reason to be attached to him!" said she as soon as she could speak.

"Indeed, indeed I had." And after a long silence—"He was everything to me, every thing from the first hour I can recollect. He never let me miss my parents. How he attended to all my pleasures and wishes, how he watched and cared for me, and bore with me, even I can never know."

He spoke in short half sentences of intense feeling, and Mrs. Edmonstone was much moved by such affection in one said to have been treated with an excess of strictness, much compassionating the lonely boy, who had lost every family tie in one.

"When the first pain of the sudden parting has passed," said she, "you will like to remember the affection which you knew how to value."

"If I had but known!" said Guy, "but there was I, hasty, reckless, disregarding his comfort, rebelling against—O, what would I not give to have those restraints restored!"

"It is what we all feel in such losses," said Mrs. Edmonstone. "There is always much to wish otherwise; but I am sure you can have the happiness of knowing you were his great comfort."

"It was what I ought to have been."

She knew that nothing could have been more filial and affectionate than his conduct, and tried to say something of the kind, but he would not listen.

"That is worst of all," he said; "and you must not trust what they say of me. They would be sure to praise me, if I was any thing short of a brute."

A silence ensued, while Mrs. Edmonstone was trying to think of some consolation. Suddenly Guy looked up, and spoke eagerly:

"I want to ask something—a great favour—but you make me venture. You see how I am left alone—you know how little I can trust myself. Will you take me in hand—let me talk to you—and tell me if I am wrong, as freely as if I were Charles? I know it is asking a great deal, but you knew my grandfather, and it is in his name."

She held out her hand, and with tears answered,—

"Indeed I will, if I see any occasion."

"You will let me trust to you to tell me when I get too

vehement? above all, when you see my temper failing? Thank you; you don't know what a relief it is!"

"But you must not call yourself alone. You are one of us now."

"Yes; since you have made that promise," said Guy, and for the first time she saw the full beauty of his smile—a sort of sweetness and radiance of which eye and brow partook almost as much as the lips. It alone would have gained her heart.

"I must look on you as a kind of nephew," she added, kindly. "I used to hear so much of you from my brother."

"Oh!" cried Guy, lighting up, "Archdeacon Morville was always so kind to me. I remember him very well!"

"Ah! I wish ——" there she paused, and added,— "it is not right to wish such things—and Philip is very like his father."

"I am very glad his regiment is so near. I want to know him better."

"You knew him at Redclyffe, when he was staying there?"

"Yes," said Guy, his colour rising; "but I was a boy then, and a very foolish, headstrong one. I am glad to meet him again. What a grand-looking person he is!"

"We are very proud of him," said Mrs. Edmonstone, smiling. "I don't think there has been an hour's anxiety about him since he was born."

The conversation was interrupted by the sound of Charles's crutches slowly crossing the hall. Guy sprung to help him to his sofa, and then, without speaking, hurried up stairs.

"Mamma, *tête-à-tête* with the silent one!" exclaimed Charles.

"I will not tell you all I think of him," said she, leaving the room.

"Hum!" soliloquized Charles. "That means that my lady mother has adopted him, and thinks I should laugh at her, or straightway set up a dislike to him, knowing my contempt for heroes and hero-worship. It's a treat to have Philip out of the way, and if it was but possible to get out of hearing of his perfections, I should have some peace. If I thought this fellow had one spice of the kind, I'd never trouble my head about him more,—and yet I don't believe he has such a pair of hawk's eyes for nothing!"

The hawk's eyes, as Charles called them, shone brighter

from that day forth, and their owner began to show more interest in what passed around. Laura was much amused by a little conversation she held with him one day, when a party of their younger neighbours were laughing and talking nonsense round Charles's sofa. He was sitting a little way off, in silence, and she took advantage of the loud laughing to say:—

"You think this is not very satisfactory?" And as he gave a quick glance of inquiry,—"Don't mind saying so. Philip and I often agree that it is a pity to spend so much time in laughing at nothing—at such nonsense."

"Is it nonsense?"

"Listen—no, don't, it is too silly."

"Nonsense must be an excellent thing if it makes people so happy," said Guy, thoughtfully. "Look at them; they are like—not a picture, that has no life—but a dream—or, perhaps, a scene in a play."

"Did you never see any thing like it?"

"Oh, no! All the morning calls I ever saw were formal, every one stiff, and speaking by rote, or talking politics. How glad I used to be to get on horseback again! But to see these—why it is like the shepherd's glimpse at the pixies!—as one reads a new book, or watches what one only half understands—a rook's parliament, or a gathering of sea-fowl on the Shag Rock."

"A rook's parliament?"

"The people at home call it a rook's parliament when a whole crowd of rooks settle on some bare, wide common, and sit there as if they were consulting, not feeding, only stalking about with drooping wings, and solemn black cloaks."

"You have found a flattering simile," said Laura, "as you know that rooks never open their mouths without cause."

Guy had never heard the riddle, but he caught the pun instantly, and the clear merry sound of his hearty laugh surprised Charles, who instantly noted it as another proof that there was some life in him.

Indeed, each day began to make it evident that he had, on the whole, rather a superabundance of animation than otherwise. He was quite confidential with Mrs. Edmonstone, on whom he used to lavish, with boyish eagerness, all that interested him, carrying her the passages in books that pleased him, telling her about Redclyffe affairs, and giving her his

letters from Markham, the steward. His head was full of his horse, Deloraine, which was coming to him under the charge of a groom, and the consultations were endless about the means of transport, Mr. Edmonstone almost as eager about it as he was himself.

He did not so quickly become acquainted with the younger portion of the family, but his spirits rose every day. He whistled as he walked in the garden, and Bustle, instead of pacing soberly behind him, now capered, nibbled his pockets, and drew him into games of play which Charles and Amabel were charmed to overlook from the dressing-room window. There was Guy, leaping, bounding, racing, rolling the dog over, tripping him up, twitching his ears, tickling his feet, catching at his tail, laughing at Bustle's springs, contortions, and harmless open-mouthed attacks, while the dog did little less than laugh too, with his intelligent amber eyes, and black and red mouth. Charles began to find a new interest in his listless life in the attempt to draw Guy out, and make him give one of his merry laughs. In this, however, he failed when his wit consisted in allusions to the novels of the day, of which Guy knew nothing. One morning he underwent a regular examination, ending in,—

"Have you read any thing?"

"I am afraid I am very ignorant of modern books."

"Have you read the ancient ones?" asked Laura.

"I've had nothing else to read."

"Nothing to read but ancient books!" exclaimed Amabel, with a mixture of pity and astonishment.

"Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus," said Guy, smiling.

"There, Amy," said Charles, "if he has the Vicar among his ancient books, you need not pity him."

"It is like Philip," said Laura; "he was brought up on the old standard books, instead of his time being frittered away on the host of idle modern ones."

"He was free to concentrate his attention on Sir Charles Grandison," said Charles.

"How could any one do so?" said Guy. "How could any one have any sympathy with such a piece of self-satisfaction?"

"Who could? Eh, Laura?" said Charles.

"I never read it," said Laura, suspecting malice.

"What is your opinion of perfect heroes?" continued Charles.

"Here comes one," whispered Amy to her brother, blushing at her piece of naughtiness, as Philip Morville entered the room.

After the first greetings, and inquiries after his sister, whom he had been visiting, Laura told him what they had been saying of the advantage of a scanty range of reading.

"True," said Philip; "I have often been struck by finding how ignorant people are, even of Shakspeare; and I believe the blame chiefly rests on the cheap rubbish in which Charlie is nearly walled up there."

"Ay," said Charles, "and who haunts that rubbish at the beginning of every month? I suppose to act as pioneer, though whether any one but Laura heeds his warnings, remains to be proved."

"Laura does heed?" asked Philip, well pleased.

"I made her read me the part of Dombey that hurts women's feelings most, just to see if she would go on—the part about little Paul—and I declare I shall think the worse of her ever after—she was so stony-hearted, that to this day she does not know whether he is dead or alive."

"I can't quite say I don't know whether he lived or died," said Laura, "for I found Amy in a state that alarmed me, crying in the green-house, and I was very glad to find it was nothing worse than little Paul."

"I wish you would have read it," said Amy; and looking shyly at Guy, she added, "Won't you?"

"Well done, Amy!" said Charles. "In the very face of the young man's companion!"

"Philip does not really think it wrong," said Amy.

"No," said Philip; "those books open fields of thought, and, as their principles are negative, they are not likely to hurt a person well armed with the truth."

"Meaning," said Charles, "that Guy and Laura have your gracious permission to read Dombey."

"When Laura has a cold or toothache."

"And I?" said Guy.

"I am not so sure about the expediency for you," said Philip; "it would be a pity to begin with Dickens, when there is so much of a higher grade equally new to you. I suppose you do not understand Italian."

"No," said Guy, abruptly, and his dark eyebrows contracted.

Philip went on. "If you did, I should not recommend you the translation of *Ipromessi Sposi*, one of the most beautiful books in any language. You have it in English, I think, Laura."

Laura fetched it; Guy, with a constrained "thank you," was going to take it up, rather as if he was putting a force upon himself, when Philip more quickly took the first volume, and eagerly turned over the pages—"I can't stand this," he said, "where is the original?"

It was soon produced; and Philip, finding the beautiful history of Fra Cristoforo, began to translate it fluently, and with an admirable choice of language that silenced Charles's attempts to interrupt and criticise. Soon Guy, who had at first lent only reluctant attention, was entirely absorbed, his eyebrows relaxed, a look of earnest interest succeeded, his countenance softened, and when Fra Cristoforo humbled himself, exchanged forgiveness, and received *il pane del perdono*, tears hung on his eyelashes.

The chapter was finished, and, with a smothered exclamation of admiration, he joined the others in begging Philip to proceed. The story thus read was very unlike what it had been to Laura and Amy when they puzzled it out as an Italian lesson, or to Charles, when he carelessly tossed over the translation in search of Don Abbondio's humours; and thus between reading and conversation the morning passed very agreeably.

At luncheon, Mr. Edmonstone asked Philip to come and spend a day or two at Hollywell, and he accepted the invitation for the next week. "I will make Thorndale drive me out, if you will give him a dinner."

"Of course, of course," said Mr. Edmonstone, "we shall be delighted. We were talking of asking him, a day or two ago, eh, mamma?"

"Thank you," said Philip; "a family party is an especial treat to him," laying a particular stress on the word "family party," and looking at his aunt.

At that moment the butler came in, saying, "Sir Guy's servant is come, and has brought the horse, sir."

"Deloraine come!" cried Guy, springing up. "Where?"

"At the door, sir."

Guy darted out, Mr. Edmonstone following. In another instant, however, Guy put his head into the room again. "Mrs. Edmonstone, won't you come and see him? Philip, you have not seen Deloraine."

Off he rushed, and the others were just in time to see the cordial look of honest gladness with which William, the groom, received his young master's greeting, and the delighted recognition between Guy, Bustle, and Deloraine. Guy had no attention for any thing else till he had heard how they had prospered on the journey; and then he turned to claim his friends' admiration for the beautiful chestnut, his grandfather's birthday present. The ladies admired with earnestness that compensated for want of knowledge, the gentleman with greater science and discrimination; indeed Philip, as a connoisseur, could not but, for the sake of his own reputation, discover something to criticise. Guy's brows drew together again, and his eyes glanced as if he was much inclined to resent the remarks, as attacks at once on Deloraine and on his grandfather; but he said nothing, and presently went to the stable with Mr. Edmonstone to see about the horse's accommodations. Philip stood in the hall with the ladies.

"So I perceive you have dropped the title already," observed he, to Laura.

"Yes," said Mrs. Edmonstone, replying for her daughter, "it seemed to give him pain, by reminding him of his loss, and he was so strange and forlorn just at first, that we were glad to do what we could to make him feel himself more at home."

"Then you get on pretty well now?"

The reply was in chorus with variations—"Oh, excellently!"

"He is so entertaining," said Charlotte.

"He sings so beautifully," said Amabel.

"He is so right-minded," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"So very well informed," said Laura.

Then it all began again.

"He plays chess so well," said Amy.

"Bustle is such a dear dog," said Charlotte.

"He is so attentive to Charlie," said Mrs. Edmonstone, going into the drawing-room to her son.

"Papa says he will make up for the faults of all his ancestors," said Amabel.

"His music! oh, his music!" said Laura.

"Philip," said Charlotte, earnestly, "you really should learn to like him."

"Learn, impertinent little puss?" said Philip, smiling, "why should I not like him?"

"I was sure you would try," said Charlotte, impressively.

"Is it hard?" said Amy. "But, oh Philip! you could not help liking his singing."

"I never heard such a splendid voice," said Laura; "so clear and powerful, and yet so wonderfully sweet in the low soft notes. And a very fine ear: he has a real talent for music."

"Ah! inherited, poor fellow," said Philip, compassionately.

"Do you pity him for it?" said Amy, smiling.

"Do you forget?" said Philip. "I would not advise you to make much of this talent in public; it is too much a badge of his descent."

"Mamma did not think so," said Amy. "She thought it a pity she could not learn regularly, with such a talent; so the other day, when Mr. Radford was giving us a lesson, she asked Guy just to sing up and down the scale. I never saw any thing so funny as old Mr. Radford's surprise, it was almost like the music-lesson in *La Figlia del Reggimento;* he started and looked at Guy, and seemed in a perfect transport, and now Guy is to take regular lessons."

"Indeed!"

"But do you really mean," said Laura, "that if your mother had been a musician's daughter, and you had inherited her talent, that you would have been ashamed of it?"

"Indeed, Laura," said Philip, with a smile, "I am equally far from guessing what I should do if my mother had been any thing but what she was, as from guessing what I should do if I had a talent for music."

Mrs. Edmonstone here called her daughters to get ready for their walk, as she intended to go to East Hill, and they might as well walk with Philip as far as their roads lay together.

Philip and Laura walked on by themselves, a little in advance of the others. Laura was very anxious to arrive at a right understanding of her cousin's opinion of Guy.

"I am sure there is much to like in him," she said.

"There is; but is it the highest praise to say there is much to like? People are not so cautious when they accept a man *in toto*."

"Then, do you not?"

Philip's answer was—

> "He who the lion's whelp has nurst
> At home, with fostering hand,
> Finds it a gentle thing at first,
> Obedient to command."

"Do you think him a lion's whelp?"

"I am afraid I saw the lion just now in his flashing eyes and contracted brow. There is an impatience of advice, a vehemence of manner that I can hardly deem satisfactory. I do not speak from prejudice, for I think highly of his candour, warmth of heart, and desire to do right; but from all I have seen, I should not venture as yet to place much dependence on his steadiness of character or command of temper.

"He seems to have been very fond of his grandfather, in spite of his severity. He is but just beginning to brighten up a little."

"Yes; his disposition is very affectionate,—almost a misfortune to one so isolated from family ties. He showed remarkably well at Redclyffe, the other day; boyish, of course, and without much self-command, but very amiably. It is very well for him that he is removed from thence, for all the people idolize him to such a degree that they could not fail to spoil him."

"It would be a great pity if he went wrong."

"Great, for he has many admirable qualities, but still they are just what persons are too apt to fancy compensation for faults. I never heard that any of his family, except perhaps that unhappy old Hugh, were deficient in frankness and generosity, and therefore these do not satisfy me. Observe, I am not condemning him; I wish to be perfectly just; all I say is, that I do not trust him till I have seen him tried."

Laura did not answer, she was disappointed; yet there was a justice and guardedness in what Philip said, that made it impossible to gainsay it, and she was pleased with his confidence. She thought how cool and prudent he was, and how grieved she should be if Guy justified his doubts; and so they walked on in such silence as is perhaps the strongest proof of

intimacy. She was the first to speak, led to do so by an expression of sadness about her cousin's mouth. "What are you thinking of, Philip?"

"Of Locksley Hall. There is nonsense, there is affectation in that, Laura; there is scarcely poetry, but there is power, for there is truth."

"Of Lockley Hall! I thought you were at Stylehurst."

"So I was, but the one brings the other."

"I suppose you went to Stylehurst while you were at St. Mildred's. Did Margaret take you there?"

"Margaret? Not she; she is too much engaged with her book-club, and her soirées, and her societies of every sort and kind."

"How did you get on with the Doctor?"

"I saw as little of him as I could, and was still more convinced that he does not know what conversation is. Hem!" Philip gave a deep sigh. "No; the only thing to be done at St. Mildred's, is to walk across the moors to Stylehurst. It is a strange thing to leave that tumult of gossip, and novelty, and hardness, and to enter on that quiet autumnal old world, with the yellow leaves floating silently down, just as they used to do, and the atmosphere of stillness round the green churchyard."

"Gossip!" repeated Laura. "Surely not with Margaret?"

"Literary scientific gossip is worse than gossip in a primary sense, without pretension."

"I am glad you had Stylehurst to go to. How was the old sexton's wife?"

"Very well; trotting about on her pattens as merrily as ever."

"Did you go into the garden?"

"Yes; Fanny's ivy has entirely covered the south wall, and the acacia is so tall and spreading, that I longed to have the pruning of it. Old Will keeps every thing in its former state."

They talked on of his old home till the stern, bitter look of regret and censure had faded from his brow and given way to a softened melancholy expression.

CHAPTER IV.

A fig for all dactyls, a fig for all spondees,
A fig for all dunces and dominie grandees.
SCOTT.

"HOW glad I am!" exclaimed Guy, entering the drawing-room.

"Wherefore?" inquired Charles.

"I thought I was too late, and I am very glad to find no one arrived, and Mr. and Mrs. Edmonstone not come down."

"But where have you been?"

"I lost my way on the top of the down; I fancied some one told me there was a view of the sea to be had there."

"And can't you exist without a view of the sea?"

Guy laughed. "Every thing looks so dull—it is as if the view was dead or imprisoned—walled up with wood and hill, and wanting that living ripple, heaving and struggling."

"And your fine rocks," said Laura.

"I wish you could see the Shag-stone. A great island mass, sloping on one side, precipitous on the other, with the spray dashing on it. If you see it from ever so far off, there is still that white foam coming and going—a glancing speck, like the light in an eye."

"Hark! a carriage."

"The young man and the young man's companion," said Charles.

"How can you?" said Laura. "What would any one suppose Mr. Thorndale to be?"

"Not Philip's valet," said Charles, "if it is true that no man is a hero to his *valley-de-sham;* whereas, what is not Philip to the Honourable James Thorndale?"

"Philip, Alexander, and Bucephalus into the bargain,"

suggested Amy, in her demure, frightened whisper, sending all but Laura into a fit of laughter, the harder to check because the steps of the parties concerned were heard approaching.

Mr. Thorndale was a quiet individual, one of those of whom there is least to be said, so complete a gentleman that it would have been an insult to call him gentlemanlike; agreeable and clever rather than otherwise, good-looking, with a high-bred air about him, so that it always seemed strange that he did not make more impression.

A ring at the front-door almost immediately followed their arrival.

"Encore?" asked Philip, looking at Laura with a sort of displeased surprise.

"Unfortunately, yes," said Laura, drawing aside.

"One of my uncle's family parties," said Philip. "I wish I had not brought Thorndale. Laura, what is to be done to prevent the tittering that always takes place when Amy and those Harpers are together?"

"Some game?" said Laura. He signed approval; but she had time to say no more, for her father and mother came down, and some more guests entered.

It was just such a party as continually grew up at Hollywell, for Mr. Edmonstone was so fond of inviting, that his wife never knew in the morning how many would assemble at her table in the evening. But she was used to it, and too good a manager even to be called so. She liked to see her husband enjoy himself in his good-natured, open-hearted way. The change was good for Charles, and thus it did very well, and there were few houses in the neighbourhood more popular than Hollywell.

The guests this evening were Maurice de Courcy, a wild young Irishman, all noise and nonsense, a great favourite with his cousin, Mr. Edmonstone; two Miss Harpers, daughters of the late clergyman, good-natured, second-rate girls; Dr. Mayerne, Charles's kind old physician, the friend and much-loved counsellor at Hollywell, and the present vicar, Mr. Ross, with his daughter Mary.

Mary Ross was the greatest friend that the Miss Edmonstones possessed, though, she being five-and-twenty, they had not arrived at perceiving that they were on the equal terms of young ladyhood

She had lost her mother early, and had owed a great deal to the kindness of Mrs. Edmonstone, as she grew up among her numerous elder brothers. She had no girlhood; she was a boy till fourteen, and then a woman, and she was scarcely altered since the epoch of that transition, the same in likings, tastes, and duties. "Papa" was all the world to her, and pleasing him had much the same meaning now as then; her brothers were like playfellows; her delights were still a lesson in Greek from papa, a school-children's feast, a game at play, a new book. It was only a pity other people did not stand still too. "Papa," indeed, had never grown sensibly older since the year of her mother's death; but her brothers were whiskered men, with all the cares of the world, and no holidays; the school-girls went out to service, and were as a last year's brood to an old hen; the very children she had fondled were young ladies, as old, to all intents and purposes, as herself, and here were even Laura and Amy Edmonstone fallen into that bad habit of growing up! Though little Amy had still much of the kitten in her composition, and could play as well as Charlotte or Mary herself, when they had the garden to themselves.

Mary took great pains to amuse Charles, always walking to see him in the worst weather, when she thought other visitors likely to fail, and chatting with him as if she was the idlest person in the world, though the quantity she did at home and in the parish would be too amazing to be recorded. Spirited and decided, without superfluous fears and fineries, she had a tall, firm, robust figure, and a rosy good-natured face, with a manner that, though perfectly feminine, had in it an air of strength and determination.

Hollywell was a hamlet, two miles from the parish church of East-hill, and Mary had thus seen very little of the Edmonstones' guest, having only been introduced to him after church on Sunday. The pleasure on which Charles chiefly reckoned for that evening was the talking him over with her when the ladies came in from the dining-room. The Miss Harpers, with his sisters, gathered round the piano, and Mrs. Edmonstone sat at Charles's feet, while Mary knitted and talked.

"So you get on well with him?"

"He is one of those people who are never in the way, and

yet you never can forget their presence," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"His manners are quite the pink of courtesy," said Mary.

"Like his grandfather's," said Mrs. Edmonstone; "that old-school deference and attention is very chivalrous, and sits prettily and quaintly on his high spirits and animation; I hope it will not wear off."

"A vain hope," said Charles. "At present he is like that German myth, Kaspar Hauser, who lived till twenty in a cellar. It is lucky for mamma that, in his green state, he is courtly instead of bearish."

"Lucky for you, too, Charlie; he spoils you finely."

"He has the rare perfection of letting me know my own mind. I never knew what it was to have my own way before."

"Is that your complaint, Charlie! What next?" said Mary.

"So you think I have my way, do you, Mary? That is all envy, you see, and very much misplaced. Could you guess what a conflict it is every time I am helped up that mountain of a staircase, or the slope of my sofa is altered? Last time Philip stayed here, every step cost an argument, till at last, through sheer exhaustion, I left myself a dead weight on his hands, to be carried up by main strength. And after all, he is such a great strong fellow, that I am afraid he did not mind it; so next time I *crutched* myself down alone, and I hope that did provoke him."

"Sir Guy is so kind that I am ashamed," said Mrs. Edmonstone. "It seems as if we had brought him for the sole purpose of waiting on Charles."

"Half his heart is in his horse," said Charles. "Never had man such delight in the 'brute creation.'"

"They have been his chief playfellows," said Mrs. Edmonstone. "The chief of his time was spent in wandering in the woods or on the beach, watching them and their ways."

"I fairly dreamed of that Elysium of his last night," said Charles: "a swamp half frozen on a winter's night, full of wild ducks. Here, Charlotte, come and tell Mary the roll of Guy's pets."

Charlotte began. "There was the sea-gull, and the hedgehog, and the fox, and the badger, and the jay, and the monkey, that he bought because it was dying, and cured it, only it died

the next winter, and a toad, and a raven, and a squirrel, and ——"

"That will do, Charlotte."

"Oh! but Mary has not heard the names of all his dogs. And, Mary, he has cured Bustle of hunting my puss. We held them up to each other, and puss hissed horribly, but Bustle did not mind it a bit; and the other day, when Charles tried to set him at her, he would not take the least notice."

"Now, Charlotte," said Charles, waving his hand, with a provoking mock politeness, "have the goodness to return to your friends."

Tea over, Laura, in obedience to Philip, proposed the game of definitions, which was carried on with great spirit for more than an hour. It was hard to say which made most fun, Maurice, Charles, or Guy; the last no longer a spectator, but an active contributor to the sport. When the break up came, Mary and Amabel were standing over the table together, collecting the scattered papers, and observing that it had been very good fun. "Some so characteristic," said Amy, "such as Maurice's definition of happiness,—a row at Dublin."

"Some were very deep, though," said Mary; "if it is not treason, I should like to make out whose that other was of happiness."

"You mean this," said Amy. "'Gleams from a brighter world, too soon eclipsed or forfeited.' I thought it was Philip's, but it is Sir Guy's writing. How very sad! I should not like to think so. And he was so merry all the time! This is his, too, I see; this one about riches being the freight for which the traveller is responsible."

"There is a great deal of character in them," said Mary. "I should not have wondered at any of us penniless people philosophizing in the fox and grapes style, but for him, and at his age——"

"He has been brought up so as to make the theory of wisdom come early," said Philip, who was nearer than she thought.

"Is that intended for disparagement?" she asked, quickly.

"I think very highly of him; he has a great deal of sense and right feeling," was Philip's sedate answer; and he turned away to say some last words to Mr. Thorndale.

The Rosses were the last to depart, Mary in cloak and

clogs, while Mr. Edmonstone lamented that it was in vain to offer the carriage; and Mary laughed, and thanked, and said the walk home with Papa was the greatest of treats in the frost and starlight.

"Don't I pity you, who always go out to dinner in a carriage!" were her last words to Laura.

"Well, Guy," said Charlotte, "how do you like it?"

"Very much, indeed. It was very pleasant."

"You are getting into the fairy ring," said Laura, smiling.

"Ay," he said, smiling, too; "but it does not turn to tinsel. Would it if I saw more of it?" and he looked at Mrs. Edmonstone.

"It would be no compliment to ourselves to say so," she answered.

"I suppose tinsel or gold depends on the using," said he, thoughtfully; "there are some lumps of solid gold among those papers, I am sure, one, in particular, about a trifle. May I see that again—I mean—

Little things
On little wings
Bear little souls to heaven."

"Oh! that was only a quotation," said Amy, turning over the definitions again with him, and laughing at some of the most amusing; while, in the mean time, Philip went to help Laura, who was putting some books away in the anteroom.

"Yes, Laura," he said, "he has thought, mind, and soul, he is no mere rattle."

"No, indeed. Who could help seeing his superiority over Maurice?"

"If only he does not pervert his gifts, and if it is not all talk. I don't like such excess of openness about his feelings; it is too like talking for talking's sake."

"Mamma says it is the transparency of youthfulness. You know he has never been at school; so his thoughts come out in security of sympathy, without fear of being laughed at. But it is very late. Good-night."

The frost turned to rain the next morning, and the torrents streamed against the window, seeming to have a kind of attraction for Philip and Guy, who stood watching them.

Guy wondered if the floods would be out at Redclyffe; and his cousins were interested by his description of the sud

den, angry rush of the mountain streams, eddying fiercely along, bearing with them tree and rock; while the valleys became lakes, and the little mounds islets; and the trees looked strangely out of proportion when only their branches were visible. "Oh! a great flood is famous fun," said he.

"Surely," said Philip, "I have heard some legend of your being nearly drowned in some flood."

"Yes," said Guy, "I had a tolerable ducking."

"Oh, tell us all about it!" said Amy.

"Ay! I have a curiosity to hear a personal experience of drowning," said Charles. "Come, begin at the beginning."

"I was standing watching the tremendous force of the stream when I saw an unhappy old ram floating along, bleating so piteously, and making such absurd, helpless struggles, that I could not help pulling off my coat, and jumping in after him. It was very foolish, for the stream was too strong —I was two years younger then. Moreover, the beast was very heavy, and not at all grateful for my kind intentions, and I found myself sailing off to the sea, with the prospect of a good many rocks before long; but just then an old tree stretched out its friendly arms through the water; it stopped the sheep, and I caught hold of the branches, and managed to scramble up, while my friend got entangled in them with his wool"—

"Omne cum Proteus pecus egit altos
Visere montes,"

quoted Philip.

"*Ovium* et summâ genus hæsit ulmo,"

added Guy.

"*Ovium*," exclaimed Philip, with a face of horror. "Don't you know that *O* in *Ovis* is short? Do any thing but take liberties with Horace!"

"Get out of the tree first, Guy," said Charles, "for at present your history seems likely to end with a long ohone!"

"Well, Triton—not Proteus—came to the rescue at last," said Guy laughing; "I could not stir, and the tree bent so frightfully with the current that I expected every minute we should all go together; so I had nothing for it but to halloo as loud as I could. No one heard but Triton, the old Newfoundland dog, who presently came swimming up, so eager to help, poor fellow, that I thought he would have throttled me, or hurt himself in the branches. I took off my handker-

chief and threw it to him, telling him to take it to Arnaud, who I knew would understand it as a signal of distress."

"Did he? How long had you to wait?"

"I don't know; it seemed long enough before a most welcome boat appeared, with some men in it, and Triton in an agony. They would never have found me but for him, for my voice was gone; indeed, the next thing I remember was lying on the grass in the park, and Markham saying, 'Well, sir, if you do wish to throw away your life, let it be for something better worth saving than Farmer Holt's vicious old ram!'"

"In the language of the great Mr. Toots," said Charles, "I am afraid you got very wet."

"Were you the worse for it?" said Amy.

"Not in the least. I was so glad to hear it was Holt's! for you must know that I had behaved very ill to Farmer Holt. I had been very angry at his beating our old hound for, as he thought, worrying his sheep; not that Dart ever did, though."

"And was the ram saved?"

"Yes, and next time I saw it, it nearly knocked me down."

"Would you do it again?" said Philip.

"I don't know."

"I hope you had a medal from the Humane Society," said Charles.

"That would have been more proper for Triton."

"Yours should have been an ovation," said Charles, cutting the *o* absurdly short, and looking at Philip.

Laura saw that the spirit of teasing was strong in Charles this morning, and suspected that he wanted to stir up what he called the deadly feud, and she hastened to change the conversation by saying, "You quite impressed Guy with your translation of Fra Cristoforo."

"Indeed, I must thank you for recommending the book," said Guy; "how beautiful it is!"

"I am glad you entered into it," said Philip; "it has every quality that a fiction ought to have."

"I never read any thing equal to the repentance of the nameless man."

"Is he your favourite character?" said Philip, looking at him attentively.

"O no—of course not—though he is so grand that one

thinks most about him, but no one can be cared about as much as Lucia."

"Lucia! She never struck me as more than a well-painted peasant girl," said Philip.

"Oh!" cried Guy, indignantly; then controlling himself, he continued: "She pretends to no more than she is, but she shows the beauty of goodness in itself in a—a—wonderful way. And think of the power of those words of hers over that gloomy, desperate man."

"Your sympathy with the Innominato again," said Philip.

Every subject seemed to excite Guy to a dangerous extent, as Laura thought, and she turned to Philip to ask if he would not read to them again?

"I brought this book on purpose," said Philip. "I wished to read you a description of that print from Raffaelle —you know it—the Madonna di San Sisto."

"The one you brought to show us?" said Amy, "with the two little angels?"

"Yes, here is the description," and he began to read—

"Dwell on the form of the Child, more than human in grandeur, seated on the arms of the Blessed Virgin as on an august throne. Note the tokens of divine grace, His ardent eyes, what a spirit, what a countenance is his; yet His very resemblance to His mother denotes sufficiently that He is of us and takes care for us. Beneath are two figures adoring, each in their own manner. On one side is a pontiff, on the other a virgin, each a most sweet and solemn example, the one of aged, the other of maidenly piety and reverence. Between, are two winged boys, evidently presenting a wonderful pattern of childlike piety. Their eyes, indeed, are not turned towards the Virgin, but, both in face and gesture, they show how careless of themselves they are in the presence of God."

All were struck by the description. Guy did not speak at first, but the solemn expression of his face showed how he felt its power and reverence. Philip asked if they would like to hear more, and Charles assented: Amy worked, Laura went on with her perspective, and Guy sat by her side, making concentric circles with her compasses, or when she wanted them he tormented her parallel ruler, or cut the pencils, never letting his fingers rest except at some high or deep passage, or when some interesting discussion arose. All

were surprised when luncheon time arrived; Charles held out his hand for the book; it was given with a slight smile, and he exclaimed: "Latin! I thought you were translating. Is it your own property?"

"Yes."

"Is it very tough? I would read it, if any one would read it with me."

"Do you mean me?" said Guy; "I should like it very much, but you have seen how little Latin I know."

"That is the very thing," said Charles; "that *Ovis* of yours was music; I would have made you a Knight of the Golden Fleece on the spot. Tutors I could get by shoals, but a fellow-dunce is inestimable."

"It is a bargain, then," said Guy, "if Philip has done with the book and will lend it to us."

The luncheon bell rang, and they all adjourned to the dining-room. Mr. Edmonstone came in when luncheon was nearly over, rejoicing that his letters were done, but then he looked disconsolately from the window, and pitied the weather. "Nothing for it but billiards. People might say it was nonsense to have a billiard-table in such a house, but for his part he found there was no getting through a wet day without them. Philip must beat him as usual, and Guy might have one of the young ladies to make a fourth."

"Thank you," said Guy, "but I don't play."

"Not play—eh? Well, we will teach you in the spinning of a ball, and I'll have my little Amy to help me against you and Philip."

"No, thank you," repeated Guy, colouring, "I am under a promise."

"Ha! Eh? What? Your grandfather? He could see no harm in such play as this. For nothing, you understand. You did not suppose I meant any thing else?"

"O no, of course not," eagerly replied Guy; "but it is impossible for me to play, thank you. I have promised never even to look on at a game at billiards."

"Ah, poor man, he had too much reason," muttered Mr. Edmonstone to himself, but catching a warning look from his wife, he became suddenly silent. Guy, meanwhile, sat looking lost in sad thoughts, till rousing himself, he exclaimed, "Don't let me prevent you."

Mr. Edmonstone needed but little persuasion, and carried Philip off to the billiard-table in the front hall.

"O, I am so glad!" cried Charlotte, who had, within the last week, learnt Guy's value as a playfellow. "Now you will never go to those stupid billiards, but I shall have you always, every rainy day. Come and have a real good game at ball on the stairs."

She already had hold of his hand, and would have dragged him off at once, had he not waited to help Charles back to his sofa; and in the mean time she tried in vain to persuade her more constant playmate, Amabel, to join the game. Poor little Amy regretted the being obliged to refuse, as she listened to the merry sounds and bouncing balls, sighing more than once at having turned into a grown-up young lady; while Philip observed to Laura, who was officiating as billiard-marker, that Guy was still a mere boy.

The fates favoured Amy at last, for about half after three the billiards were interrupted, and Philip, pronouncing the rain to be almost over, invited Guy to take a walk, and they set out in a very grey wet mist, while Charlotte and Amy commenced a vigorous game at battledore and shuttlecock.

The grey mist had faded into twilight, and twilight into something like night, when Charles was crossing the hall, with the aid of Amy's arm, Charlotte carrying the crutch behind him, and Mrs. Edmonstone helping Laura with her perspective apparatus, all on their way to dress for dinner; the door opened, and in came the two Morvilles. Guy, without even stopping to take off his great coat, ran at once up-stairs, and the next moment the door of his room was shut with a bang that shook the house, and made them all start and look at Philip for explanation.

"Redclyffe temper," said he, coolly, with a half-smile curling his short upper lip.

"What have you been doing to him?" said Charles.

"Nothing. At least, nothing worthy of such ire. I only entered on the subject of his Oxford life, and advised him to prepare for it, for his education has as yet been a mere farce. He used to go two or three days in the week to one Potts, a self-educated genius—a sort of superior writing-master at the Moorworth commercial school. Of course, though it is no fault of his, poor fellow, he is hardly up to the fifth form, and he must make the most of his time, if he is not to be plucked.

I set all this before him as gently as I could, for I knew with whom I had to deal, yet you see how it is."

"What did he say?" asked Charles.

"He said nothing; so far I give him credit; but he strode on furiously for the last half mile, and this explosion is the finale. I am very sorry for him, poor boy; I beg no further notice may be taken of it. Don't you want an arm, Charlie?"

"No, thank you," answered Charles, with a little surliness.

"You had better. It really is too much for Amy," said Philip, making a move as if to take possession of him, as he arrived at the foot of the stairs.

"Like the camellia, I suppose," he replied; and taking his other crutch from Charlotte, he began determinedly to ascend without assistance, resolved to keep Philip a prisoner below him as long as he could, and enjoying the notion of chafing him by the delay. Certainly, teazing Philip was a dear delight to Charles, though it was all on trust, as, if he succeeded, his cousin never betrayed his annoyance by look or sign.

About a quarter of an hour after, there was a knock at the dressing-room door. "Come in," said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking up from her letter-writing, and Guy made his appearance, looking very downcast.

"I am come," he said, "to ask pardon for the disturbance I made just now. I was so foolish as to be irritated at Philip's manner, when he was giving me some good advice, and I am very sorry."

"What has happened to your lip?" she exclaimed.

He put his handkerchief to it. "Is it bleeding still? It is a trick of mine to bite my lip when I am vexed. It seems to help to keep down words. There! I have given myself a mark of this hateful outbreak."

He looked very unhappy; more so, Mrs. Edmonstone thought, than the actual offence required. "You have only failed in part," she said. "It was a victory to keep down words."

"The feeling is the *thing*," said Guy; "besides, I showed it plainly enough without speaking."

"It is not easy to take advice from one so little your elder," began Mrs. Edmonstone, but he interrupted her. "It was not the advice. That was very good; I—" but he spoke with an effort,—"I am obliged to him. It was—no, I won't say what,"

he added, his eyes kindling, then changing in a moment to a sorrowful, resolute tone, "Yes, but I *will*, and then I shall make myself thoroughly ashamed. It was his veiled assumption of superiority, his contempt for all I have been taught. Just as if he had not every right to despise me, with his talent and scholarship, after such egregious mistakes as I had made in the morning. I gave him little reason to think highly of my attainments; but let him slight me as much as he pleases, he must not slight those who taught me. It was not Mr. Potts's fault."

Even the name could not spoil the spirited sound of the speech, and Mrs. Edmonstone was full of sympathy. "You must remember," she said, "that in the eyes of a man brought up at a public school, nothing compensates for the want of the regular classical education. I have no doubt it was very provoking."

"I don't want to be excused, thank you," said Guy. "Oh! I am grieved; for I thought the worst of my temper had been subdued. After all that has passed—all I felt—I thought it impossible. Is there no hope for—" He covered his face with his hands, then recovering and turning to Mrs. Edmonstone, he said, "It is encroaching too much on your kindness to come here and trouble you with my confessions."

"No, no, indeed," said she, earnestly. "Remember how we agreed that you should come to me like one of my own children. And, indeed, I do not see why you need grieve in this despairing way, for you almost overcame the fit of anger; and perhaps you were off your guard because the trial came in an unexpected way?"

"It did, it did," he said, eagerly; "I don't mind being told point blank that I am a dunce, but that Mr. Potts—nay, by implication my grandfather,—should be set at nought in that cool—— But here I am again!" said he, checking himself in the midst of his vehemence; "he did not mean that, of course. I have no one to blame but myself."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Edmonstone, "that if you always treat your failings in this way, you must subdue them at last."

"It is all failing, and resolving, and failing again!" said Guy.

"Yes, but the failures become slighter and less frequent, and the end is victory."

"The end victory!" repeated Guy, in a musing tone, as he stood leaning against the mantelshelf.

"Yes, to all who persevere and seek for help," said Mrs. Edmonstone; and he raised his eyes and fixed them on her with an earnest look that surprised her, for it was almost as if the hope came home to him as something new. At that moment, however, she was called away, and directly after a voice in the next room exclaimed, "Are you there, Guy? I want an arm!" while he for the first time perceived that Charles's door was ajar.

Charles thought all this a great fuss about nothing, indeed he was glad to find there was any one who had no patience with Philip; and in his usual mischievous manner, totally reckless of the fearful evil of interfering with the influence for good which it was to be hoped that Philip might exert over Guy, he spoke thus: "I begin to think the world must be more docile than I have been disposed to give it credit for. How a certain cousin of ours has escaped numerous delicate hints to mind his own business is to me one of the wonders of the world."

"No one better deserves that his advice should be followed," said Guy, with some constraint.

"An additional reason against it," said Charles. "Plague on that bell! I meant to have broken through your formalities and had a candid opinion of Don Philip before it rang."

"Then I am glad of it; I could hardly have given you a candid opinion just at present."

Charles was vexed; but he consoled himself by thinking that Guy did not yet feel himself out of his leading-strings, and was still on his good behaviour. After such a flash as this there was no fear; but there was that in him which would create mischief and disturbance enough. Charles was well principled at the bottom, and would have shrunk with horror had it been set before him how dangerous might be the effect of destroying the chance of a friendship between Guy and the only person whose guidance was likely to be beneficial to him; but his idle, unoccupied life, and habit of only thinking of things as they concerned his immediate amusement, made him ready to do anything for the sake of opposition to Philip, and enjoy the vague idea of excitement to be derived from anxiety about his father's ward, whom at the same time he

regarded with increased liking as he became certain that what he called the Puritan spirit was not native to him.

At dinner-time, Guy was as silent as on his first arrival, and there would have been very little conversation had not the other gentlemen talked politics, Philip leading the discussion to bear upon the duties and prospects of landed proprietors, and dwelling on the extent of their opportunities for doing good. He tried to gain Guy's attention by speaking of Redclyffe, of the large circle influenced by the head of the Morville family, and of the hopes entertained by Lord Thorndale that this power would prove a valuable support to the rightful cause. He spoke in vain; the young heir of Redclyffe made answers as brief, absent, and indifferent, as if all this concerned him no more than the Emperor of Morocco, and Philip, mentally pronouncing him sullen, turned to address himself to Laura.

As soon as the ladies had left the dining-room, Guy roused himself, and began by saying to his guardian that he was afraid he was very deficient in classical knowledge; that he found he must work hard before going to Oxford; and asked whether there was any tutor in the neighbourhood to whom he could apply.

Mr. Edmonstone opened his eyes, as much amazed as if Guy had asked if there was any executioner in the neighbourhood who could cut off his head. Philip was no less surprised, but he held his peace, thinking it was well Guy had sense enough to propose it voluntarily, as he would have suggested it to his uncle as soon as there was an opportunity of doing so in private. As soon as Mr. Edmonstone had recollected himself, and pronounced it to be exceedingly proper, &c., they entered into a discussion on the neighbouring curates, and came at last to a resolution that Philip should see whether Mr. Lascelles, a curate at Broadstone, and an old schoolfellow of his own, would read with Guy a few hours in every week.

After this was settled, Guy looked relieved, though he was not himself all the evening, and sat in his old corner between the plants and the window, where he read a grave book, instead of talking, singing, or finishing his volume of "Ter Thousand a-Year." Charlotte was all this time ill at ease. She looked from Guy to Philip, from Philip to Guy; she shut her mouth as if she was forming some great resolve, then

coloured, and looked confused, rushing into the conversation with something more *mal-àpropos* than usual, as if on purpose to appear at her ease. At last, just before her bed-time, when the tea was coming in, Mrs. Edmonstone engaged with that, Laura reading, Amy clearing Charles's little table, and Philip helping Mr. Edmonstone to unravel the confused accounts of the late cheating bailiff, Guy suddenly found her standing by him, perusing his face with all the power of her great blue eyes. She started as he looked up, and put her face into Amabel's great myrtle, as if she would make it appear that she was smelling to it.

"Well, Charlotte?" said he, and the sound of his voice made her speak, but in a frightened, embarrassed whisper.

"Guy—Guy—Oh! I beg your pardon, but I wanted to ——"

"Well, what?" said he, kindly.

"I wanted to make sure that you are not angry with Philip. You don't mean to keep up the feud, do you?"

"Feud?—I hope not," said Guy, too much in earnest to be diverted with her lecture. "I am very much obliged to him."

"Are you really?" said Charlotte, her head a little on one side. "I thought he had been scolding you."

Scolding was so very inappropriate to Philip's calm, argumentative way of advising, that it became impossible not to laugh.

"Not scolding, then?" said Charlotte. "You are too nearly grown up for that, but telling you to learn, and being tiresome."

"I was so foolish as to be provoked at first," answered Guy: "but I hope I have thought better of it, and I am going to act upon it."

Charlotte opened her eyes wider than ever, but in the midst of her amazement Mrs. Edmonstone called to Guy to quit his leafy screen and come to tea.

Philip was to return to Broadstone the next day, and as Mrs. Edmonstone had some errands there that would occupy her longer than Charles liked to wait in the carriage, it was settled that Philip should drive her there in the pony-phaeton, and Guy accompany them and drive back, thus having an opportunity of seeing Philip's print of the "Madonna di San Sisto," returning some calls, and being introduced to Mr. Las-

celles, whilst she was shopping. They appointed an hour and place of meeting, and kept to it, after which Mrs. Edmonstone took Guy with her to call on Mrs. Deane, the wife of the colonel.

It was currently believed among the young Edmonstones, that Mamma and Mrs. Deane never met without talking over Mr. Morville's good qualities, and the present visit proved no exception. Mrs. Deane, a kind, open-hearted, elderly lady, was very fond of Mr. Morville, and proud of him as a credit to the regiment; and she told several traits of his excellent judgment, kindness of heart, and power of leading to the right course. Mrs. Edmonstone listened, and replied with delight; and no less pleasure and admiration was seen reflected in her young friend's radiant face.

Mrs. Edmonstone's first question, as they set out on their homeward drive, was whether they had seen Mr. Lascelles?

"Yes," said Guy, "I am to begin to-morrow, and go to him every Monday and Thursday."

"That is prompt."

"Ah! I have no time to lose; besides, I have been leading too smooth a life with you. I want something unpleasant to keep me in order. Something famously horrid," repeated he, smacking the whip with a relish, as if he would have applied that if he could have found nothing else.

"You think you live too smoothly at Hollywell," said Mrs. Edmonstone, hardly able, with all her respect for his good impulses, to help laughing at this strange boy.

"Yes. Happy, thoughtless, vehement; that is what your kindness makes me. Was it not a proof, that I must needs fly out at such a petty provocation?"

"I should not have thought it such a very exciting life; certainly not such as is usually said to lead to thoughtlessness; and we have been even quieter than usual since you came."

"Ah, you don't know what stuff I am made of," said Guy, gravely, though smiling; "your own home party is enough to do me harm; it is so exceedingly pleasant."

"Pleasant things do not necessarily do harm."

"Not to you; not to people who are not easily unsettled; but when I go up-stairs, after a talking, merry evening, such as the night before last, I find that I have enjoyed it too much; I am all abroad; I can hardly fix my thoughts, and I don't

know what to do, since here I must be, and I can't either be silent or sit up in my own room."

"Certainly not," said she, smiling; "there are duties of society which you owe even to us dangerous people."

"No, no; don't misunderstand me. The fault is in myself. If it was not for that, I could learn nothing but good," said Guy, speaking very eagerly, distressed at her answer.

"I believe I understand you," said she, marvelling at the serious, ascetic temper, coupled with the very high animal spirits. "For your comfort, I believe the unsettled feeling you complain of is chiefly the effect of novelty. You have led so very retired a life, that a lively family party is to you what dissipation would be to other people; and, as you must meet the world some time or other, it is better the first encounter with it should be in this comparatively innocent form. Go on watching yourself, and it will do you no harm."

"Yes, but if I find it does me harm? It would be cowardly to run away, and resistance should be from within. Yet, on the other hand, there is the duty of giving up, wrenching oneself from all that has temptation in it."

"There is nothing," said Mrs. Edmonstone, "that has not temptation in it; but I should think the rule was plain. If a duty such as that of living among us for the present, and making yourself moderately agreeable, involves temptations, they must be met and battled from within. In the same way, your position in society, with all its duties, could not be laid aside because it is full of trial. Those who do such things are faint-hearted, and fail in trust in Him who fixed their station, and finds room for them to deny themselves in 'the trivial round and common task.' It is pleasure involving no duty that should be given up, if we find it liable to lead us astray."

"I see," answered Guy, musingly; "and this reading comes naturally, and is just what I wanted to keep the pleasant things from getting a full hold on me. I ought to have thought of it sooner, instead of dawdling a whole month in idleness. Then all this would not have happened. I hope it will be very tough."

"You have no great love for Latin and Greek?"

"Oh!" cried Guy, eagerly, "to be sure, I delight in Homer and the Georgics, and plenty more. What splendid

things there are in these old fellows! But I never liked the drudgery part of the affair; and now if I am to be set to work to be accurate, and to get up all the grammar and the Greek roots, it will be horrid enough in all conscience."

He groaned as deeply as if he had not been congratulating himself just before on the difficulty.

"Who was your tutor?" asked Mrs. Edmonstone.

"Mr. Potts," said Guy. "He is a very clever man; he had a common grammar-school education, but he struggled on—taught himself a great deal—and at last thought it great promotion to be a teacher at the Commercial Academy, as they call it, at Moorworth, where Markham's nephew's went to school. He is very clever, I assure you, and very patient of the hard, wearing life he must have of it there, and oh! so enjoying a new book or an afternoon to himself. When I was about eight or nine, I began, with him, riding into Moorworth three times in a week; and I have gone on ever since. I am sure he has done the best he could for me; and he made the readings very pleasant by his own enjoyment. If Philip had known the difficulties that man has struggled through, and his beautiful temper, persevering in doing his best and being contented, I am sure he could never have spoken contemptuously of him."

"I am sure he would not," said Mrs. Edmonstone; "all he meant was, that a person without a university education cannot tell what the requirements are to which a man must come up in these days."

"Ah!" said Guy, laughing, "how I wished Mr. Potts had been there to have enjoyed listening to Philip and Mr. Lascelles discussing some new lexicon, digging down for roots of words, and quoting passages of obscure Greek poets at such a rate, that if my eyes had been shut I could have thought them two withered old students in spectacles and snuff-coloured coats."

"Philip was in his element," said Mrs. Edmonstone, smiling.

"Really," proceeded Guy, with animation, "the more I hear and see of Philip, the more I wonder. What a choice collection of books he has—so many of them school prizes, and how beautifully bound."

"Ah! that is one of Philip's peculiar ways. With all his prudence and his love of books, I believe he would not buy

one unless he had a reasonable prospect of being able to dress it handsomely. Did you see the print?"

"Yes, that I did. What glorious loveliness! There is nothing that does it justice but the description in the lectures. Oh! I forgot you have not heard it. You must let me read it to you by-and-by. Those two little angels, what faces they have! Perfect innocence—one full of reasoning, the other of unreasoning adoration!"

"I see it!" suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Edmonstone; "I see what you are like, in one of your looks, not by any means in all—it is to the larger of those two angels."

"Very seldom, I should guess," said Guy; and sinking his voice as if he was communicating a most painful fact, he added, "My real likeness is old Sir Hugh's portrait at home. But what were we saying? Oh! about Philip. How nice those stories were of Mrs. Deane's."

"She is very fond of him."

"To have won so much esteem and admiration already, from strangers with no prejudice in his favour.—It must be entirely his own doing; and well it may! Every time one hears of him, something comes out to make him seem more admirable. You are laughing at me, and I own it is presumptuous to praise; but I did not mean to praise, only to admire."

"I like very much to hear my nephew praised; I was only smiling at your enthusiastic way."

"I only wonder I am not more enthusiastic," said Guy. "I suppose it is his plain good sense that drives away that sort of feeling, for he is as near heroism in the way of self-sacrifice as a man can be in these days."

"Poor Philip! if disappointment can make a hero, it has fallen to his share. Ah! Guy, you are brightening and looking like one of my young ladies in hopes of a tale of true love crossed, but it was only love of a sister."

"The sister for whom he gave up so much?"

"Yes, his sister Margaret. She was eight or nine years older, very handsome, very clever, a good deal like him—a pattern elder sister; indeed, she brought him up in great part after his mother died, and he was devoted to her. I do believe it made the sacrifice of his prospects quite easy to him, to know it was for her sake, that she would live on at Stylehurst, and the change be softened to her. Then came Fanny's

illness, and that led to the marriage with Dr. Henley. It was just what no one could object to; he is a respectable man, in full practice, with a large income; but he is much older than she is, and not at all her equal in mind or cultivation, and, though I hardly like to say so, not at all a religious man. At any rate, Margaret Morville was one of the last people one could bear to see marry for the sake of an establishment."

"Could her brother do nothing?"

"He expostulated with all his might; but at nineteen he could do little with a determined sister of twenty-seven; and the very truth and power of his remonstrance must have made it leave a sting. Poor fellow, I believe he suffered terribly—just as he had lost Fanny, too, which he felt very deeply, for she was a very sweet creature, and he was very fond of her. It was like losing both sisters and home at once."

"Has he not just been staying with Mrs. Henley?"

"Yes. There was never any coolness, as people call it. He is the one thing she loves and is proud of. They always correspond, and he often stays with her; but he owns to disliking the Doctor, and I don't think he has much comfort in Margaret herself, for he always comes back more grave and stern than he went. Her house, with all her good wishes, can be no home to him; and so we try to make Hollywell supply the place of Stylehurst as well as we can."

"How glad he must be to have you to comfort him!"

"Philip? Oh, no. He was always reserved; open to no one but Margaret, not even to his father; and since her marriage he has shut himself up within himself more than ever. It has, at least I think it is this that has given him a severity, an unwillingness to trust, which I believe is often the consequence of a great disappointment either in love or in friendship."

"Thank you for telling me," said Guy; "I shall understand him better and look up to him more. Oh! it is a cruel thing to find that what one loves is, or has not been, all one thought. What must he not have gone through!"

Mrs. Edmonstone was well pleased to have given so much assistance to Guy's sincere desire to become attached to his cousin, one of the most favourable signs in the character that was winning so much upon her.

CHAPTER V.

A cloud was o'er my childhood's dream,
I sat in solitude;
I know not how—I know not why,
But round my soul all drearily
There was a silent shroud.
THOUGHTS IN PAST YEARS.

MRS. EDMONSTONE was anxious to hear Mr. Lascelles' opinion of his pupil, and in time she learnt that he thought Sir Guy had very good abilities, and a fair amount of general information; but that his classical knowledge was far from accurate, and mathematics had been greatly neglected. He had been encouraged to think his work done, when he had gathered the general meaning of a passage, or translated it into English verse, spirited and flowing, but often further from the original than he or his tutor could perceive. He had never been taught to work, at least as other boys study, and great application would be requisite to bring his attainments to a level with those of far less clever boys educated at a public school.

Mr. Lascelles told him so at first; but as there were no reflections on his grandfather or on Mr. Potts, Guy's lip did not suffer, and he only asked how many hours a day he ought to read. "Three," said Mr. Lascelles, with due regard to a probable want of habits of application; but then remembering how much was undone, he added that "it ought to be four, or more, if possible."

"Four it *shall* be," said Guy; "five, if I can."

His whole strength of will was set to accomplish these four hours, taking them before and after breakfast, working hard all the morning till the last hour before luncheon, when he came to read the lectures on poetry with Charles. Here

for the first time it appeared that Charles had so entirely ceased to consider him as company as to domineer over him like his own family.

"Used as Guy had been to an active out-of-doors life, and now turned back to authors he had read long ago, to fight his way through the construction of their language, not excusing himself one jot of the difficulty, nor turning aside from one mountain over which his own efforts could carry him, he found his work as tough and tedious as he could wish or fear, and by the end of the morning was thoroughly fagged. Then would have been the refreshing time for recreation in that pleasant idling place, the Hollywell drawing-room. Any other time of day would have suited Charles as well for the reading, but he liked to take the hour at noon, and never perceived that this made all the difference to his friend of a toil or a pleasure. Now and then Guy gave tremendous yawns; and once when Charles told him he was very stupid, proposed a different time; but as Charles objected, he yielded as submissively as the rest of the household were accustomed to do.

To watch Guy was one of Charles's chief amusements, and he rejoiced greatly in the prospect of hearing his history of his first dinner-party. Mr., Mrs., and Miss Edmonstone, and Sir Guy Morville were invited to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Brownlow. Mr. Edmonstone was delighted as usual with any opportunity of seeing his neighbours; Guy looked as if he did not know whether he liked the notion or not; Laura told him it would be very absurd and stupid, but there would be some good music, and Charles ordered her to say no more. that he might have the account, the next morning, from a fresh and unprejudiced mind.

His next morning's question was, of course, "How did you like your party?"

"O, it was great fun!" Guy's favourite answer was caught up in the midst, as Laura replied, "It was just what their parties always are."

"Come, let us have the history. Who handed who into dinner? I hope Guy had Mrs. Brownlow."

"Oh, no," said Laura, "we had both the honourables."

"Not Philip."

"No," said Guy; "the fidus Achates was without his pious Æneas."

"Very good, Guy," said Charles, enjoying the laugh.

"I could not help thinking of it," said Guy, rather apologizing, "when I was watching Thorndale's manner; it is such an imitation of Philip; looking droller, I think, in his absence than his presence. I wonder if he is conscious of it."

"It does not suit him at all," said Mrs. Edmonstone, "because he has no natural dignity."

"A man ought to be six foot one, person and mind, to suit with that grand, sedate, gracious way of Philip's," said Guy.

"There's Guy's measure of Philip's intellect," said Charles; "just six foot one inch."

"As much more than other people's as his height," said Guy.

"Who was your neighbour, Laura?" asked Amy.

"Dr. Mayerne; I was very glad of him, to keep off those hunting friends of Mr. Brownlow, who never ask any thing but if one has been to the races, and if one likes balls."

"And how did Mrs. Brownlow behave?" said Charles.

"She is a wonderful woman," said Mrs. Edmonstone, in her quiet way; and Guy, with an expression between drollery and simplicity, said, "Then there aren't many like her?"

"I hope not," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"Is she really a lady?"

"Philip commonly calls her 'that woman,'" said Charles. "He has never got over her one night classing him with his 'young man' and myself, as three of the shyest monkeys she ever came across."

"She won't say so of Maurice," said Laura, as they recovered the laugh.

"I heard her deluding some young lady by saying he was the eldest son," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"Mamma!" cried Amy, "could she have thought so?"

"I put in a gentle hint on Lord de Courcy's existence, to which she answered in her quick way, 'O ay, I forgot; but then he is the second, and that's the next thing.'"

"If you could have heard the stories she and Maurice were telling each other!" said Guy. "He was playing her off, I believe; for whatever she told, he capped with something more wonderful. Is she really a lady?"

"By birth," said Mrs. Edmonstone. "It is only her high spirits and small judgment that make her so absurd."

"How loud she is too!" said Laura. "What was all that about horses, Guy?"

"She was saying she drove two such spirited horses that all the grooms were afraid of them; and when she wanted to take out her little boy, Mr. Brownlow said, 'You may do as you like, my dear, but I won't have my son's neck broken, whatever you do with your own.' So Maurice answered by declaring he knew a lady who drove, not two, but four-in-hand, and when the leaders turned round and looked her in the face, gave a little nod, and said, 'I'm obliged for your civility.'"

"Oh! I wish I had heard that," cried Laura.

"Did you hear her saying she smoked cigars?"

Every one cried out with horror or laughter.

"Of course Maurice told a story of a lady who had a cigar-case hanging to her chatelain, and always took one to refresh her after a ball."

Guy was interrupted by the announcement of his horse, and rode off at once to Mr. Lascelles.

On his return, he went straight to the drawing-room, where Mr. Edmonstone was reading to Charles, and abruptly exclaimed—

"I told you wrong. She only said she had smoked one cigar." Then, perceiving that he was interrupting, he added, "I beg your pardon," and went away.

The next evening, on coming in from a solitary skating, he found the younger party in the drawing-room, Charles entertaining the Miss Harpers with the story of the cigars. He hastily interposed,—

"I told you it was but one."

"Ay, tried one, and went on. She was preparing an order for Havannah."

"I thought I told you I repeated the conversation incorrectly."

"If it is not the letter, it is the spirit," said Charles, vexed at interference with his sport of amazing the Harpers with outrageous stories of Mrs. Brownlow.

"It is just like her," said one of them. "I could believe any thing of Mrs. Brownlow."

"You must not believe this," said Guy, gently. "I repeated incorrectly what had better have been forgotten, and I must beg my foolish exaggeration may go no further."

Charles became sullenly silent; Guy stood thoughtful, and Laura and Amabel could not easily sustain the conversation till the visitors took their leave.

"Here's a pother!" grumbled Charles, as soon as they were gone.

"I beg your pardon for spoiling your story," said Guy, "but it was my fault, so I was obliged to interfere."

"Bosh!" said Charles. "Who cares whether she smoked one or twenty. She is Mrs. Brownlow still."

"The point is, what was truth?" said Laura.

"Straining at gnats," said Charles.

"Little wings?" said Guy, glancing at Amabel.

"Have it your own way," said Charles, throwing his head back; "they must be little souls indeed that stick at such trash."

Guy's brows were contracted with vexation, but Laura looked up very prettily, saying,—

"Never mind him. We must all honour you for doing such an unpleasant thing."

"You will recommend him favourably to Philip," growled Charles.

There was no reply, and presently Guy asked whether he would go up to dress. Having no other way of showing his displeasure, he refused, and remained nursing his ill-humour, till he forgot how slight the offence had been, and worked himself into a sort of insane desire—half mischievous, half revengeful—to be as provoking as he could in his turn.

Seldom had he been more *contrary*, as his old nurse was wont to call it. No one could please him, and Guy was not allowed to do any thing for him. Whatever he said was intended to rub on some sore place in Guy's mind. His mother and Laura's signs made him worse, for he had the pleasure of teazing them also; but Guy endured it all with perfect temper, and he grew more cross at his failure; yet from force of habit, at bed-time, he found himself on the stairs with Guy's arm supporting him.

"Good night," said Guy, when he had landed him in his own room.

"Good night," said Charles; "I tried hard to poke up the lion to-night, but I see it won't do."

This plea of trying experiments was neither absolutely true nor false; but it restored Charles to himself, by saving

a confession that he had been out of temper, and enabling him to treat with his wonted indifference the expostulations of father, mother, and Laura.

Now that the idea of 'poking up the lion' had once occurred, it became his great occupation to attempt it. He wanted to see some evidence of the fiery temper, and it was a new sport to try to rouse it; one, too, which had the greater relish as it kept the rest of the family on thorns.

He would argue against his real opinion, talk against his better sense, take the wrong side, and say much that was very far from his true sentiments. Guy could not understand at first, and was quite confounded at some of the views he espoused, till Laura came to his help, greatly irritating her brother by hints that he was not in earnest. Next time she could speak to Guy alone, she told him he must not take all Charles said literally.

"I thought he could hardly mean it; but why should he talk so?"

"I can't excuse him, I know it is very wrong, and at the expense of truth, and it is very disagreeable of him,—I wish he would not; but he always does what he likes, and it is one of his amusements, so we must bear with him, poor fellow."

From that time Guy seemed to have no trouble in reining in his temper in arguing with Charles, except once, when the lion was fairly roused by something that sounded like a sneer about King Charles I.

His whole face changed, his hazel eye gleamed with light like an eagle's, and he started up, exclaiming,—

"You did not mean that!"

"Ask Strafford," answered Charles, coolly, startled, but satisfied to have found the vulnerable point.

"Ungenerous, unmanly," said Guy, his voice low, but quivering with indignation; "ungenerous to reproach him with what he so bitterly repented. Could not his penitence, could not his own blood——" but as he spoke, the gleam of wrath faded, the flush deepened on the cheek, and he left the room.

"Ha!" soliloquized Charles, "I've done it! I could fancy his wrath something terrific when it was once well up. I didn't know what was coming next; but I believe he has got himself pretty well in hand. It is playing with edge tools;

and now I have been favoured with one flash of the Morville eye, I'll let him alone; but it *ryled* me to be treated as something beneath his anger, like a woman or a child."

In about ten minutes Guy came back: "I am sorry I was hasty just now," said he.

"I did not know you had such personal feelings about King Charles."

"If you would do me a kindness," proceeded Guy, "you would just say you did not mean it. I know you do not, but if you would only say so."

"I am glad you have the wit to see I have too much taste to be a roundhead."

"Thank you," said Guy, "I hope I shall know your jest from your earnest another time. Only, if you would oblige me, you would never jest again about King Charles."

His brow darkened into a stern, grave expression, so entirely in earnest, that Charles, though making no answer, could not do otherwise than feel compliance unavoidable. Charles had never been so entirely conquered, yet, strange to say, he was not, as usual, rendered sullen.

At night, when Guy had taken him to his room, he paused, and said,—"You are sure you have forgiven me?"

"What! you have not forgotten that yet?" said Charles.

"Of course not."

"I am sorry you bear so much malice," said Charles, smiling.

"What are you imagining?" cried Guy. "It was my own part I was remembering, as I must, you know."

Charles did not choose to betray that he did not see the necessity.

"I thought King Charles's wrongs were rankling. I only only spoke as taking liberties with a friend."

"Yes," said Guy, thoughtfully, "it may be foolish, but I do not feel as if one could do so with King Charles. He is too near home; he suffered too much from scoffs and railings; his heart was too tender, his repentance too deep, for his friends to add one word even in jest to the heap of reproach. How one would have loved him!" proceeded Guy, wrapt up in his own thoughts,—"loved him for the gentleness so little accordant with the rude times and the part he had to act,—served him half like a knight's devotion to his lady-love, half like devotion to a saint, as Montrose did—

"Great, good, and just, could I but rate
My grief, and thy too rigid fate,
I'd weep the world in such a strain,
As it should deluge once again."

"And, oh!" cried he, with sudden vehemence, "how one would have fought for him!"

"You would!" said Charles. "I should like to see you and Deloraine charging at the head of Prince Rupert's troopers."

"I beg your pardon," said Guy, suddenly recalled, and colouring deeply; "I believe I forgot where I was, and have treated you to one of my old dreams in my boatings at home. You may quiz me as much as you please to-morrow. Good night."

"It was a rhapsody!" thought Charles; "yes, it was. I wonder I don't laugh at it; but I was actually carried along. Fancy that! He did it so naturally; in fact, it was all from the bottom of his heart, and I could not quiz him,—no, no more than Montrose himself. He is a strange article! but he keeps one awake, which is more than most people do!

Guy was indeed likely to keep every one awake just then; for Mr. Edmonstone was going to take him out hunting for the first time, and he was half wild about it. The day came, and half an hour before Mr. Edmonstone was ready, Guy was walking about the hall, checking many an incipient whistle, and telling every one that he was beforehand with the world, for he had read one extra hour yesterday, and had got through the others before breakfast. Laura thought it very true that as Philip said he was only a boy, and moralized to Charlotte on his being the same age as herself—very nearly eighteen. Mrs. Edmonstone told Charles it was a treat to see any one so happy, and when he began to chafe at the delay, did her best to beguile the time, but without much success. Guy had never learnt to wait patiently, and had a custom of marching up and down, and listening with his head thrown back, or as Charles used to call it, "prancing in the hall."

If Mrs. Edmonstone's patience was tried by the preparation for the hunt in the morning, it was no less her lot to hear of it in the evening. Guy came home in the highest spirits, pouring out his delight to every one, with animation and power of description giving all he said a charm. The pleasure did not lose by repetition; he was more engrossed

by it every time; and no one could be more pleased with his ardour than Mr. Edmonstone, who, proud of him and his riding, gave a sigh to past hopes of poor Charles, and promoted the hunting with far more glee than he had promoted the reading.

The Redclyffe groom, William, whose surname of Robinson was entirely forgotten in the appellation of William of Deloraine, was as proud of Sir Guy as Mr. Edmonstone could be; but made representations to his master that he must not hunt Deloraine two days in the week, and ride him to Broadstone two more. Guy then walked to Broadstone; but William was no better pleased, for he thought the credit of Redclyffe compromised, and punished him by reporting Deloraine not fit to be used next hunting-day. Mr. Edmonstone perceived that Guy ought to have another hunter; Philip heard of one for sale, and after due inspection all admired—even William, who had begun by remarking that there might be so many screw-looses about a horse, that a man did not know what to be at with them.

Philip who was conducting the negotiation, came to dine at Hollywell to settle the particulars. Guy was in a most eager state; and they and Mr. Edmonstone talked so long about horses, that they sent Charles to sleep; his mother began to read, and the two elder girls fell into a low, mysterious confabulation of their own, till they were startled by a question from Philip as to what could engross them so deeply.

"It was," said Laura, "a banshee story in Eveleen de Courcy's last letter."

"I never like telling ghost stories to people who don't believe in them," half whispered Amabel to her sister.

"Do you believe them?" asked Philip, looking full at her.

"Now I wont have little Amy asked the sort of question she most dislikes," interposed Laura; "I had rather ask if you laugh at us for thinking many ghost stories inexplicable?"

"Certainly not."

"The universal belief could hardly be kept up without some grounds," said Guy.

"That would apply as well to fairies," said Philip.

"Every one has an unexplained ghost story," said Amy.

"Yes," said Philip; "but I would give something to meet any one whose ghost story did not rest on the testimony of a friend's cousin's cousin, a very strong-minded person."

"I can't imagine how a person who had seen a ghost could ever speak of it," said Amy.

"Did not you tell us a story of pixies at Redclyffe?" said Laura.

"O yes, the people there believe in them firmly. Jonas Ledbury heard them laughing one night when he could not get the gate open," said Guy.

"Ah! you are the authority for ghosts," said Philip.

"I forgot that," said Laura; "I wonder we never asked you about your Redclyffe ghost."

"You look as if you had seen it yourself," said Philip.

"You have not?" exclaimed Amy, almost frightened.

"Come, let us have the whole story," said Philip. "Was it your own reflection in the glass? was it old Sir Hugh? or was it the murderer of Becket? Come, the ladies are both ready to scream at the right moment. Never mind giving him a cocked-hat, for with whom may you take a liberty, if not with an ancestral ghost of your own?"

Amy could not think how Philip could have gone on all this time; perhaps it was because he was not watching how Guy's color varied, how he bit his lip; and at last his eyes seemed to grow dark in the middle, and to sparkle with fire, as with a low, deep tone, like distant thunder, conveying a tremendous force of suppressed passion, he exclaimed, "Beware of trifling ——," then breaking off, hastened out of the room.

"What's the matter?" asked Mr. Edmonstone, startled from his nap; and his wife looked up anxiously, but returned to her book as her nephew replied "Nothing."

"How could you, Philip?" said Laura.

"I really believe he has seen it!" said Amy, in a startled whisper.

"He has felt it, Amy—the Morville spirit," said Philip.

"It is a great pity you spoke of putting a cocked-hat to it," said Laura; "he must have suspected us of telling you what happened about Mrs. Brownlow."

"And you are going to do it now?" said her sister, in a tone of remonstrance.

"I think Philip should hear it," said Laury; and she proceeded to relate the story. She was glad to see that her cousin was struck with it; he admired this care to maintain strict truth, and even opened a memorandum-book—the sight of which Charles much dreaded—and read the following extract: "Do not think of one falsity as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unintended. Cast them all aside. They may be light and accidental, but they are an ugly soot from the smoke of the pit, for all that; and it is better that our hearts should be swept clean of them, without over care as to which is the largest or blackest."

Laura and Amy were much pleased; but he went on to regret that such excellent dispositions should be coupled with such vehemence of character and that unhappy temper. Amy was glad that her sister ventured to hint that he might be more cautious in avoiding collisions.

"I am cautious," replied he, quickly and sternly; "I am not to be told of the necessity of exercising forbearance with this poor boy; but it is impossible to reckon on all the points on which he is sensitive."

"He is sensitive," said Laura. "I don't mean only in temper, but in every thing. I wonder if it is part of his musical temperament to be as keenly alive to all around, as his ear is to every note. A bright day, a fine view, is such real happiness to him; he dwells on every beauty of Redclyffe with such affection; and then, when he reads, Charles says it is like going over the story again himself to watch his face act it in that unconscious manner."

"He makes all the characters so real in talking them over," said Amy, "and he does not always know how they will end before they begin."

"I should think it hardly safe for so excitable a mind to dwell much on the world of fiction," said Philip.

"Nothing has affected him so much as Sintram," said Laura. "I never saw any thing like it. He took it up by chance, and stood reading it while all those strange expressions began to flit over his face, and at last he fairly cried over it so much, that he was obliged to fly out of the room. How often he has read it I cannot tell; I believe he has bought one for himself, and it is as if the engraving had a fascination for him; he stands looking at it as if he was in a dream."

"He is a great mystery," said Amy.

"All men are mysterious," said Philip, "but he not more than others, though he may appear so to you, because you have not had much experience, and also because most of the men you have seen have been rounded into uniformity like marbles, their sharp angles rubbed off against each other at school."

"Would it be better if there were more sharp angles?" said Laura, thus setting on foot a discussion on public schools, on which Philip had, of course, a great deal to say.

Amy's kind little heart was meanwhile grieving for Guy, and longing to see him return, but he did not come till after Philip's departure. He looked pale and mournful, his hair hanging loose and disordered, and her terror was excited lest he might actually have seen his ancestor's ghost, which, in spite of her desire to believe in ghosts in general, she did not by any means wish to have authenticated. He was surprised and a good deal vexed to find Philip gone, but he said hardly any thing, and it was soon bed-time. When Charles took his arm, he exclaimed, on finding his sleeve wet—"What can you have been doing?"

"Walking up and down under the wall," replied Guy, with some reluctance.

"What, in the rain?"

"I don't know, perhaps it was."

Amy, who was just behind, carrying the crutch, dreaded Charles's making any allusion to Sintram's wild locks and evening wanderings, but ever since the outburst about King Charles, the desire to tease and irritate Guy had ceased.

They parted at the dressing-room door, and as Guy bade her good night, he pushed back the damp hair that had fallen across his forehead, saying, "I am sorry I disturbed your evening. I will tell you the meaning of it another time."

"He has certainly seen the ghost!" said silly little Amy, as she shut herself into her own room in such a fit of vague "eerie" fright, that it was not till she had knelt down, and with her face hidden in her hands, said her evening prayer, that she could venture to lift up her head and look into the dark corners of the room.

"Another time!" Her heart throbbed at the promise.

The next afternoon, as she and Laura were fighting with a refractory branch of westeria which had been torn down by the wind, and refused to return to its place, Guy, who had

been with his tutor, came in from the stable-yard, reduced the trailing bough to obedience, and then joined them in their walk. He looked grave, was silent at first, and then spoke abruptly—"It is due to you to explain my behaviour last night."

"Amy thinks you must have seen the ghost," said Laura, trying to be gay.

"Did I frighten you?" said Guy, turning round, full of compunction. "No, no, I never saw it. I never even heard of its being seen. I am very sorry."

"I was very silly," said Amy, smiling.

"But," proceeded Guy, "when I think of the origin of the ghost story I cannot laugh, and if Philip knew all—"

"Oh! he does not," cried Laura; "he only looks on it as we have always done, as a sort of romantic appendage to Redclyffe. I should think better of a place for being haunted."

"I used to be proud of it," said Guy. "I wanted to make out whether it was old Sir Hugh or the murderer of Becket, who was said to groan and turn the lock of Dark Hugh's chamber. I hunted among old papers, and a horrible story I found. That wretched Sir Hugh,—the same who began the quarrel with your mother's family—he was a courtier of Charles II., as bad or worse than any of that crew—"

"What was the quarrel about?" said Laura.

"He was believed to have either falsified or destroyed his father's will, so as to leave his brother, your ancestor, landless; his brother remonstrated, and he turned him out of doors. The forgery never was proved, but there was little doubt of it. There are traditions of his crimes without number, especially his furious anger and malice. He compelled a poor lady to marry him, though she was in love with another man; then he was jealous; he waylaid his rival, shut him up in the turret chamber, committed him to prison, and bribed Judge Jefferies to sentence him—nay, it is even said he carried his wife to see the execution! He was so execrated that he fled the country; he went to Holland, curried favour with William of Orange, brought his wealth to help him, and that is the deserving action which got him the baronetcy! He served in the army a good many years, and came home when he thought his sins would be forgotten. But do you remember those lines?" and Guy repeated them in

the low, rigid tone, almost of horror, in which he had been telling the history :—

> "On some his vigorous judgments light,
> In that dread pause 'twixt day and night,
> Life's closing twilight hour,
> Round some, ere yet they meet their doom,
> Is shed the silence of the tomb,
> The eternal shadows lower."

"It was so with him ; he lost his senses, and after many actions of mad violence he ended by hanging himself in the very room where he had imprisoned his victim."

"Horrible !" said Laura. "Yet, I do not see why, when it is all past, you should feel it so deeply."

"How should I not feel it ?" answered Guy. "Is it not written that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children ? You wondered to see me so foolish about Sintram. Well, it is my firm belief that such a curse of sin and death as was on Sintram rests on the descendants of that miserable man."

The girls were silent, struck with awe and dismay at the fearful reality with which he pronounced the words. At last Amy whispered, "But Sintram conquered his doom."

At the same time Laura gathered her thoughts together, and said, "This must be an imagination. You have dwelt on it and fostered it till you believe it, but such notions should be driven away, or they will work their own fulfilment."

"Look at the history of the Morvilles, and see if it be an imagination," said Guy. "Crime and bloodshed have been the portion of each—each has added weight and darkness to the doom which he has handed on. My own poor father, with his early death, was, perhaps, the happiest !"

Laura saw the idea was too deeply rooted to be treated as a fancy, and she found a better argument. "The doom of sin and death is on us all, but you should remember that if you are a Morville you are also a Christian."

"He does remember it !" said Amy, raising her eyes to his face, and then casting them down, blushing at having understood his countenance, where, in the midst of the gloomy shades, there rested for an instant the gleam which her mother had likened to the expression of Raffaelle's cherub.

They walked on for some time in silence. At last Laura

exclaimed, "Are you really like the portrait of this unfortunate Sir Hugh?"

Guy made a sign of assent.

"Oh! it must have been taken before he grew wicked," said Amy; and Laura felt the same conviction, that treacherous revenge could never have existed beneath so open a countenance, with so much of highmindedness, pure faith, and contempt of wrong in every glance of the eagle eye, in the frank expansion of the smooth forehead.

They were interrupted by Mr. Edmonstone's hearty voice, bawling across the garden for one of the men. "O Guy! are you there?" cried he, as soon as he saw him. "Just what I wanted! Your gun, man! We are going to ferret a rabbit."

Guy ran off at full speed in search of his gun, whistling to Bustle. Mr. Edmonstone found his man, and the sisters were again alone.

"Poor fellow!" said Laura.

"You will not tell all this to Philip?" said Amy.

"I would show why he was hurt, and it can be no secret."

"I dare say you are right, but I have a feeling against it. Well, I am glad he had not seen the ghost!"

The two girls had taken their walk, and were just going in, when, looking round, they saw Philip walking fast and determinedly up the approach, and as they turned back to meet him, the first thing he said was, "Where is Guy?"

"Ferreting rabbits with papa. What is the matter?"

"And where is my aunt?"

"Driving out with Charles and Charlotte. What *is* the matter?"

"Look here. Can you tell me the meaning of this which I found on my table when I came in this morning!"

It was a card to Sir Guy Morville, on the back of which was written in pencil, "Dear P., I find hunting and reading don't agree, so take no further steps about the horse. Many thanks for your trouble.—G. M."

"There," said Philip, "is the result of brooding all night on his resentment."

"O no!" cried Laura, colouring with eagerness, "you do not understand him. He could not bear it last night, because, as he has been explaining to us, that old Sir Hugh's sto

was more shocking than we ever guessed, and he has a fancy that their misfortunes are a family fate, and he could not bear to hear it spoken of lightly."

"Oh! he has been telling you his own story, has he?"

Laura's colour grew still deeper. "If you had been there," she said, "you would have been convinced. Why will you not believe him that he finds hunting interfere with reading."

"He should have thought of that before," said Philip. "Here have I half bought the horse! I have wasted the whole morning on it, and now I have to leave it on the man's hands. I had a dozen times rather take it myself, if I could afford it. Such a bargain as I had made, and such an animal as you will not see twice in your life."

"It is a great pity," said Laura. "He should have known his own mind. I don't like people to give trouble for nothing."

"Crazy about it last night, and giving it up this morning! A most extraordinary proceeding. No, no, Laura, this is not simple fickleness, it would be too absurd. It is temper, temper, which makes a man punish himself, in hopes of punishing others."

Laura still spoke for Guy, and Amy rejoiced; for if her sister had not taken up the defence of the absent, she must, and she felt too strongly to be willing to speak. It seemed too absurd for one feeling himself under such a doom to wrangle about a horse, yet she was somewhat amused by the conviction that if Guy had really wished to annoy Philip he had certainly succeeded.

There was no coming to an agreement. Laura's sense of justice revolted at the notion of Guy's being guilty of petty spite; while Philip, firm in his preconceived idea of his character, and his own knowledge of mankind, was persuaded that he had imputed the true motive, and was displeased at Laura's attempting to argue the point. He could not wait to see any one else, as he was engaged to dine out, and set off again at his quick resolute pace.

"He is very unfair!" exclaimed Amy.

"He did not mean to be so," said Laura; "and though he is mistaken in imputing such motives, Guy's conduct has certainly been vexatious."

They were just turning to go in, when they were inter

rupted by the return of the carriage and before Charles had been helped up the steps, their father and Guy came in sight. While Guy went to shut up Bustle, who was too wet for the drawing-room, Mr. Edmonstone came up to the others, kicking away the pebbles before him, and fidgeting with his gloves, as he always did, when vexed.

"Here's a pretty go!" said he. "Here is Guy telling me he won't hunt any more!"

"Not hunt!" cried Mrs. Edmonstone and Charles at once; "and why?"

"Oh! something about its taking his mind from his reading; but that can't be it—impossible, you know. I'd give ten pounds to know what has vexed him. So keen as he was about it last night, and I vow, one of the best riders in the whole field. Giving up that horse too—I declare it is a perfect sin! I told him he had gone too far, and he said he had left a note with Philip this morning."

"Yes," said Laura; "Philip has just been here about it. Guy left a card, saying, hunting and reading would not agree."

"That is an excuse, depend upon it," said Mr. Edmonstone. "Something has nettled him, I am sure. It could not be that Gordon, could it, with his hail-fellow-well-met manner? I thought Guy did not half like it the other day when he rode up with his 'Hollo, Morville!' The Morvilles have a touch of pride of their own; eh, mamma?"

"I should be inclined to believe his own account of himself," said she.

"I tell you, 'tis utterly against reason," said Mr. Edmonstone, angrily. "If he was a fellow like Philip, or James Ross, I could believe it; but he—he make a book-worm! He hates it, like poison, at the bottom of his heart, I'll answer for it; and the worst of it is, the fellow putting forward such a fair reason, one can't—being his guardian, and all—say what one thinks of it oneself. Eh, mamma?"

"Not exactly," said Mrs. Edmonstone, smiling.

"Well, you take him in hand, mamma; I dare say he will tell you the rights of it, and if it is only that Gordon, explain it rightly to him; show him 'tis only the man's way; tell him he treats me so for ever, and would the Lord Lieutenant if he was in it."

"For a' that and a' that," said Charles, as Amy led him into the drawing-room.

"You are sure the reading is the only reason?" said Amy.

"He is quite absurd enough for it," said Charles; but "absurd" was pronounced in a way that made its meaning far from annoying even to Guy s little champion.

Guy came in the next moment, and, running lightly up stairs after Mrs. Edmonstone, found her opening the dressing-room door, and asked if he might come in.

"By all means," she said; "I am quite ready for one of our twilight talks."

"I am afraid I have vexed Mr. Edmonstone," began Guy; "and I am very sorry."

"He was only afraid that something might have occurred to vex you, which you might not like to mention to him," said Mrs. Edmonstone, hesitating a little.

"Me! What could I have said to make him think so? I am angry with no one but myself. The fact is only this, the hunting is too pleasant; it fills up my head all day and all night; and I don't attend rightly to any thing else. If I am out in the morning and try to pay for it at night, it will not do; I can but just keep awake, and that's all; the Greek letters all seem to be hunting each other, the simplest things grow difficult, and at last all I can think of, is how near the minute hand of my watch is to the hour I have set myself. So, for the last fortnight, every construing with Mr. Lascelles has been worse than the last; and as to my Latin verses, they were beyond every thing shocking, so you see there is no making the two things agree, and the hunting must wait till I grow steadier, if ever I do. Heigho! It is a great bore to be so stupid, for I thought—But it is of no use to talk of it!"

"Mr. Edmonstone would be a very unreasonable guardian indeed, to be displeased," said his friend, smiling. "You say you stopped the purchase of the horse. Why so? Could you not keep him till you are more sure of yourself?"

"Do you think I might?" joyously exclaimed Guy. "I'll write to Philip this minute by the post. Such a splendid creature; it would do you good to see it—such action—such a neck—such spirit. It would be a shame not to secure it. But no—no"—and he checked himself sorrowfully. "I had made up my mind before that I don't deserve it. If it was

here, it would be always to be tried; if I heard the hounds, I don't know how I should keep from riding after them; whereas, now I can't, for William won't let me take Deloraine. No, I can't trust myself to keep such a horse, and not hunt. It will serve me right to see Mr. Brownlow on it, for he was looking at it, and he will never miss such a chance!" and the depth of his sigh bore witness to the struggle it cost him.

"I should not like to use any one as you use yourself," said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking at him with affectionate anxiety, which seemed suddenly to change the current of his thoughts, for he exclaimed abruptly—"Mrs. Edmonstone, can you tell me any thing about my mother?"

"I am afraid not," said she, kindly; "you know we had so little intercourse with your family, that I heard little but the bare facts."

"I don't think," said Guy, leaning on the chimney-piece, "that I ever thought much about her till I knew you; but lately I have fancied a great deal about what might have been if she had but lived."

It was not Mrs. Edmonstone's way to say half what she felt; and she went on—"Poor thing! I believe she was quite a child."

"Only seventeen when she died," said Guy.

Mrs. Edmonstone went to a drawer, took out two or three bundles of old letters, and, after searching in them by the firelight, said—"Ah! here is a little about her; it is in a letter from my sister-in-law, Philip's mother, when they were staying at Stylehurst."

"Who? My father and mother?" cried Guy, eagerly.

"Did you not know they had been there three or four days?"

"No—I know less about them than any body," said he sadly: but as Mrs. Edmonstone waited, doubtful as to whether she might be about to make disclosures for which he was unprepared, he added hastily—"I do know the main facts of the story; I was told them last autumn:" and an expression, denoting the remembrance of great suffering, came over his face, then, pausing a moment, he said—"I knew Archdeacon Morville had been very kind."

"He was always interested about your father," said Mrs. Edmonstone; "and happening to meet him in London some little time after his marriage, he—he was pleased with the

manner in which he was behaving then, thought—thought——And here, recollecting that she must not speak ill of old Sir Guy, nor palliate his son's conduct, poor Mrs. Edmonstone got into an inextricable confusion—all the worse because the fierce twisting of a penwiper in Guy's fingers denoted that he was suffering a great trial of patience. She avoided the difficulty thus: "It is hard to speak of such things when there is so much to be regretted on both sides; but the fact was, my brother thought your father was harshly dealt with at that time. Of course he had done very wrong; but he had been so much neglected and left to himself, that it seemed hardly fair to visit his offence on him as severely as if he had had more advantages. So it ended in their coming to spend a day or two at Stylehurst; and this is the letter my sister-in-law wrote at the time:—

"'Our visitors have just left us, and on the whole I am much better pleased than I expected. The little Mrs. Morville is a very pretty creature, and as engaging as long flaxen curls, apple-blossom complexion, blue eyes, and the sweetest of voices, can make her; so full of childish glee and playfulness, that no one would stop to think whether she was ladylike any more than you would with a child. She used to go singing like a bird about the house, as soon as the first strangeness wore off, which was after her first game at play with Fanny and little Philip. She made them very fond of her, as indeed she would make every one who spent a day or two in the same house with her. I could almost defy Sir Guy not to be reconciled after one sight of her sweet sunny face. She is all affection and gentleness, and with tolerable training any thing might be made of her; but she is so young in mind and manners, that one cannot even think of blaming her for her elopement, for she had no mother, no education but in music; and her brother seems to have forced it on, thrown her in Mr. Morville's way, and worked on his excitable temperament till he hurried them into the marriage. Poor little girl, I suppose she little guesses what she has done; but it was pleasant to see how devotedly attached he seemed to her; and there was something beautiful in the softening of his impetuous tones when he said, "Marianne;" and her pride in him was very pretty, like a child playing at matronly airs.'"

Guy gave a long, heavy sigh, brushed away a tear, and after a long silence said, "Is that all?"

"All that I like to read to you. Indeed, there is no more about her; and it would be of no use to read all the reports that were going about.—Ah! here," said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking into another letter, "she speaks of your father as a very fine young man, with most generous impulses,"—but here again she was obliged to stop, for the next sentence spoke of "a noble character ruined by mismanagement." "She never saw them again," continued Mrs. Edmonstone; "Mr. Dixon, your mother's brother, had great influence with your father, and made matters worse—so much worse, that my brother did not feel himself justified in having any more to do with them."

"Ah! he went to America," said Guy; "I don't know any more about him, except that he came to the funeral, and stood with his arms folded, not choosing to shake hands with my poor grandfather." After another silence, he said, "Will you read that again?" and when he had heard it, he sat shading his brow with his hand, as if to bring the fair, girlish picture fully before his mind, while Mrs. Edmonstone sought in vain among her letters for one which did not speak of the fiery passions, excited on either side, in terms too strong to be fit for his ears.

When next he spoke, it was to repeat that he had not been informed of the history of his parents till within the last few months. He had of course known the manner of their death, but had only lately become aware of the circumstances attending it.

The truth was, that Guy had grown up peculiarly shielded from evil, but ignorant of the cause of the almost morbid solicitude with which he was regarded by his grandfather. He was a very happy, joyous boy, leading an active, enterprising life, though so lonely as to occasion greater dreaminess and thoughtfulness than usual at such an early age. He was devotedly attached to his grandfather, looking on him as the first and best of human beings, and silencing the belief that Sir Hugh Morville had entailed a doom of crime and sorrow on the family, by a reference to him, as one who had been always good and prosperous.

When, however, Guy had reached an age at which he must encounter the influences which had proved so baneful to others of his family, his grandfather thought it time to give him the warning of his own history.

The sins, which the repentance of years had made more odious in the eyes of the old man, were narrated; the idleness and insubordination at first, then the reckless pursuit of pleasure, the craving for excitement, the defiance of rule and authority, till folly had become vice, and vice had led to crime.

He had fought no fewer than three duels, and only one had been bloodless. His misery after the first had well nigh led to a reform; but time had dulled its acuteness—it had been lost in fresh scenes of excitement—and at the next offence rage had swept away such recollections. Indeed, so far had he lost the natural generosity of his character, that his remorse had been comparatively slight for the last, which was the worst of all, since he had forced the quarrel on his victim, Captain Wellwood, whose death had left a wife and children almost destitute. His first awakening to a sense of what his course had been, was when he beheld his only child, in the prime of youth, carried lifeless across his threshold, and attributed his death to his own intemperance and violence. That hour made Sir Guy Morville an old and a broken-hearted man; and he repented as vigorously as he had sinned.

From the moment he dared to hope that his son's orphan would be spared, he had been devoted to him, but still mournfully, envying and yet pitying his innocence as something that could not last.

He saw bright blossoms put forth, as the boy grew older; but they were not yet fruits, and he did not dare to believe they ever would be. The strength of will which had, in his own case, been the slave of his passions, had been turned inward to subdue the passions themselves, but this was only the beginning,—the trial was not yet come. He could hope his grandson might repent, but this was the best that he dared to think possible. He could not believe that a Morville could pass unscathed through the world, or that his sins would not be visited on the head of his only descendant; and the tone of his narration was throughout such as might almost have made the foreboding cause its own accomplishment.

The effect was beyond what he had expected; for a soul deeply dyed in guilt, even though loathing its own stains, had not the power of conceiving how foul was the aspect of vice, to one hitherto guarded from its contemplation, and living in a world of pure, lofty day-dreams. The boy sat the whole

time without a word, his face bent down and hidden by his clasped hands, only now and then unable to repress a start or shudder at some fresh disclosure; and when it was ended, he stood up, gazed round, and walked uncertainly, as if he did not know where he was. His next impulse was to throw himself on his knee beside his grandfather, and caress him as he used when a child. The "good-night" was spoken, and Guy was shut into his room, with his overwhelming emotions.

His grandfather a blood-stained, remorseful man! The doom complete, himself heir to the curse of Sir Hugh, and fated to run the same career; and as he knew full well, with the tendency to the family character strong within him, the germs of these hateful passions ready to take root downwards and bear fruit upwards, with the very countenance of Sir Hugh, and the same darkening, kindling eyes, of which tradition had preserved the remembrance.

He was crushed for awhile. The consciousness of strength not his own, of the still small voice that could subdue the fire, the earthquake, and the whirlwind, was slow in coming to him, and when it came, he, like his grandfather, had hope rather of final repentance than of keeping himself unstained.

His mind had not recovered the shock when his grandfather died,—died in faith and fear, with good hope of accepted repentance, but unable to convey the assurance of such hope to his grandson. Grief for the only parent he had ever known, and the sensation of being completely alone in the world, were joined to a vague impression of horror at the suddenness of the stroke, and it was long before the influence of Hollywell, or the elasticity of his own youthfulness, could rouse him from this depression.

Even then it was almost against his will that he returned to enjoyment, unable to avoid being amused, but feeling as if joy was not meant for him, and as if those around were walking "in a world of light," where he could scarcely hope to tread a few uncertain steps. In this despondency was Guy's chief danger, as it was likely to make him deem a struggle with temptation fruitless, while his high spirits and powers of keen enjoyment increased the peril of recklessness in the reaction.

It was Mrs. Edmonstone who first spoke to him cheerfully of a successful conflict with evil, and made him perceive that his temptations were but such as are common to man. She

had given him a clue to discover when and how to trust himself to enjoy; the story of Sintram had stirred him deeply, and this very day, Amy's words, seemingly unheeded and unheard, had brought home to him the hope and encouragement of that marvellous tale.

They had helped him in standing, looking steadfastly upwards, and treading down not merely evil, but the first token of coming evil, regardless of the bruises he might inflict on himself. Well for him if he was constant.

Such was Guy's inner life; his outward life, frank and joyous, has been shown, and the two flowed on like a stream, pure as crystal, but into which the eye cannot penetrate from its depth. The surface would be sometimes obscured by cloud or shade, and reveal the sombre wells beneath, but more often the sunshine would penetrate the inmost recesses, and make them glance and sparkle, showing themselves as clear and limpid as the surface itself.

CHAPTER VI.

> Can piety the discord heal,
> Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
>
> SCOTT.

IT must not be supposed that such a history of Guy's mind was expressed by himself or understood by Mrs. Edmonstone; but she saw enough to guess at his character, perceive the sort of guidance he needed, and be doubly interested in him. Much did she wish he could have such a friend as her brother would have been, and hope that nothing would prevent a friendship with her nephew.

The present question about the horse was, she thought, unfortunate, since, though Guy had exercised great self-denial, it was no wonder Philip was annoyed. Mr. Edmonstone's vexation was soon over. As soon as she had persuaded him that there had been no offence, he strove to say with a good grace, that it was very proper, and told Guy he would be a thorough book-worm and tremendous scholar, which Guy took as an excellent joke.

Philip had made up his mind to be forbearing, and to say no more about it. Laura thought this a pity, as they could thus never come to an understanding; but when she hinted it, he wore such a dignified air of not being offended, that she was much ashamed of having tried to direct one so much better able to judge. On his side, Guy had no idea of the trouble he had caused; so, after bestowing his thanks in a gay, off-hand way, which Philip thought the worst feature of the case, he did his best to bring Hecuba back to his mind, drive the hunters out of it, and appease the much aggrieved William of Deloraine.

When all William's manœuvres resulted in his master's

not hunting at all, he was persuaded it was Mr. Edmonstone's fault, compassionated Sir Guy with all his heart, and could only solace himself by taking Deloraine to exercise where he was most likely to meet the hounds. He further chose to demonstrate that he was not Mr. Edmonstone's servant, by disregarding some of his stable regulations; but as soon as this came to his master's knowledge, a few words were spoken, but those so sharp and stern, that William never attempted to disobey again.

It seemed as if it was the perception that so much was kept back by a strong force, that made Guy's least token of displeasure so formidable. A village boy, whom he caught misusing a poor dog, was found a few minutes after by Mr. Ross in a state of terror that was positively ludicrous, though it did not appear that Sir Guy had said or done much to alarm him; it was only the light in his eyes, and the strength of repressed indignation in his short, broken words, that had made the impression.

It appeared as if the force of his anger might be fearful, if once it broke forth without control; yet at the same time he had a gentleness and attention, alike to small and great, which with his high spirit and good nature, his very sweet voice and pleasant smile, made him a peculiarly winning and engaging person; and few who saw him could help being interested in him.

No wonder he had become in the eyes of the Edmonstones almost a part of their family. Mrs. Edmonstone had assumed a motherly control over him, to which he submitted with a sort of affectionate gratitude.

One day Philip remarked, that he never saw any one so restless as Guy, who could neither talk nor listen without playing with something. Scissors, pencil, paper-knife, or any thing that came in his way, was sure to be twisted and tormented, or if nothing else was at hand, he opened and shut his own knife so as to put all the spectators in fear for his fingers.

"Yes," said Laura, "I saw how it tortured your eyebrows all the time you were translating Schiller to us. I wondered you were not put out."

"I consider that to be put out—by which you mean to have the intellect at the mercy of another's folly—is beneath a reasonable creature," said Philip; "but that I was

annoyed I do not deny. It is a token of a restless, ill regulated mind."

"Restless, perhaps," said Mrs. Edmonstone; "but not necessarily ill-regulated. I should think it rather a sign that he had no one to tell him of the tricks which mothers generally nip in the bud."

"I was going to say that I think he fidgets less," said Laura; "but I think his chief contortions of the scissors have been when Philip has been here."

"They have, I believe," said her mother; "I was thinking of giving him a hint."

"Well, aunt, you are a tamer of savage beasts if you venture on such a subject," said Philip.

"Do you dare me?" she asked, smiling.

"Why, I don't suppose he would do more than give you one of his lightning glances, but that, I think, is more than you desire?"

"Considerably," said Mrs. Edmonstone; "for his sake as much as my own."

"But," said Laura, "mamma has nearly cured him of pawing like a horse in the hall when he is kept waiting. He said, he knew it was impatience, and begged her to tell him how to cure it. So she treated him as an old fairy might, and advised him, in a grave, mysterious way, always to go and play the 'Harmonious Blacksmith' when he found himself getting into *a taking*, just as if it was a charm. And he always does it most dutifully."

"It has a very good effect," said Mrs. Edmonstone; for it is apt to act as a summons to the other party, as well as a sedative to him."

"I must say I am curious to see what you will devise this time," said Philip; "since you can't set him to play on the piano; and very few can bear to be told of a trick of the kind."

In the course of that evening, Philip caused the great atlas to be hunted out, in order to make investigations on the local habitation of a certain Khan of Kipchak, who existed somewhere in the dark age. Thence he came to Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville; and Guy, who knew both the books in the library at Redclyffe, grew very eager in talking them over, and tracing their adventures—then to the Genoese merchants, where Guy confessed himself perfectly ignorant. Andrea

Doria was the only Genoese he ever heard of; but he hunted out with great interest all the localities of their numerous settlements. Then came modern Italy, and its fallen palaces; then the contrast between the republican merchant and aristocratic lord of the soil; then the corn-laws; and then, and not till then, did Philip glance at his aunt, to show her Guy balancing a Venetian weight on as few of his fingers as could support it.

"Guy," said she, smiling, "does that unfortunate glass inspire you with any arguments in favour of the Venetians?"

Guy put it down at once, and Philip proceeded to improved methods of farming, to enable landlords to meet the exigencies of the times. Guy had got hold of Mr. Edmonstone's spectacle-case, and was putting its spring to a hard trial. Mrs. Edmonstone doubted whether to interfere again; she knew this was not the sort of thing that tried his temper, yet she particularly disliked playing him off, as it were, for Philip's amusement, and quite as much letting him go on, and lower himself in her nephew's estimation. The spectacle-case settled the matter—a crack was heard, it refused to snap at all; and Guy, much discomfited, made many apologies.

"Amy laughed; Philip was much too well-bred to do any thing but curl his lip unconsciously. Mrs. Edmonstone waited till he was gone, then, when she was wishing Guy "good-night" at Charles's door, she said:

"The spectacle-case forestalled me in giving you a lecture on sparing our nerves. Don't look so very full of compunction—it is only a trick which your mother would have stopped at five years old, and which you can soon stop for yourself."

"Thank you, I will," said Guy; "I hardly knew I did it, but I am very sorry it has teased you."

Thenceforward it was curious to see how he put down and pushed away all he had once begun to touch and torture. Mrs. Edmonstone said it was self-command in no common degree; and Philip allowed that to cure so inveterate a habit required considerable strength of will.

"However," he said, "I always gave the Morvilles credit for an iron resolution. Yes, Amy, you may laugh; but if a man is not resolute in a little, he will never be resolute in great matters."

"And Guy has been resolute the right way this time," said Laura.

"May he always be the same," said Philip.

Philip had undertaken, on his way back to Broadstone, to conduct Charlotte to East Hill, where she was to spend the day with a little niece of Mary Ross. She presently came down, her bonnet-strings tied in a most resolute-looking bow, and her little figure drawn up so as to look as womanly as possible for her first walk alone with Philip. She wished the party at home "good-bye;" and as Amy and Laura stood watching her, they could not help laughing to see her tripping feet striving to keep step, her blue veil discreetly composed, and her little head turned up, as if she was trying hard to be on equal terms with the tall cousin, who meanwhile looked graciously down from his height, patronizing her like a very small child. After some space, Amy began to wonder what they could talk about, or whether they would talk at all; but Laura said there was no fear of Charlotte's tongue ever being still, and Charles rejoined:

"Don't you know that Philip considers it due to himself that his audience should never be without conversation suited to their capacity."

"Nonsense, Charlie!"

"Nay, I give him credit for doing it as well as it is in the nature of things for it to be done. The strongest proof I know of his being a superior man, is the way he adapts himself to his company. He lays down the law to us, because he knows we are all born to be his admirers; he calls Thorndale his dear fellow, and conducts him like a Mentor; but you may observe how different he is with other people—Mr. Ross, for instance. It is not showing off; it is just what the pattern hero should be with the pattern clergyman. At a dinner-party he is quite in his place; contents himself with leaving an impression on his neighbour that Mr. Morville is at home on every subject; and that he is the right thing with his brother officers is sufficiently proved, since not even Maurice either hates or quizzes him."

"Well, Charlie," said Laura, much pleased, "I am glad you are convinced at last."

"Do you think I ever wanted to be convinced that we were created for no other end than to applaud Philip? I was fulfilling the object of our existence by enlarging on a remark of Guy's, that nothing struck him more than the way in which Philip could adapt his conversation to the hearers. So the

hint was not lost on me; and I came to the conclusion that it was a far greater proof of his sense than all the maxims he lavishes on us."

"I wonder Guy was the person to make the remark," said Laura, "for it is strange that those two never appear to the best advantage together."

"O Laura, that would be the very reason," said Amy.

"The very reason?" said Charles. "Draw out your meaning, miss."

"Yes," said Amy, colouring. "If Guy—if a generous person, I mean—were vexed with another sometimes, it would be the very reason he would make the most of all his goodness."

"Heigh ho!" yawned Charles. "What o'clock is it? I wonder when Guy is ever coming back from that Lascelles."

"Your wonder need not last long," said Laura, "for I see him riding into the stable-yard."

In a few minutes he had entered; and, on being asked if he had met Philip and Charlotte, and how they were getting on, he replied—"A good deal like the print of Dignity and Impudence," at the same time throwing back his shoulders, and composing his countenance to imitate Philip's lofty deportment and sedate expression, and the next moment, putting his head on one side with a sharp little nod, and giving a certain espiegle glance of the eye and knowing twist of one corner of the mouth, just like Charlotte.

"By the by," added he, "would Philip have been a clergyman if he had gone to Oxford?"

"I don't know; I don't think it was settled," said Laura. "Why?"

"I could never fancy him one," said Guy.

"He would not have been what he is now if he had gone to Oxford," said Charles. "He would have lived with men of the same powers and pursuits with himself, and have found his level."

"And that would have been a very high one," said Guy.

"It would; but there would be all the difference there is between a feudal prince and an Eastern despot. He would know what it is to live with his match."

"But you don't attempt to call him conceited!" cried Guy with a sort of consternation.

"He is far above that; far too grand," said Amy.

"I should as soon think of calling Jupiter conceited," said Charles, and Laura did not know how far to be gratified, or otherwise.

Charles had not over-estimated Philip's readiness of self-adaptation. Charlotte had been very happy with him, talking over the *Lady of the Lake*, which she had just read, and being enlightened, partly to her satisfaction, partly to her disappointment, as to how much was historical. He listened good-naturedly to a fit of rapture, and threw in a few, not too many, discreet words of guidance to the true principles of taste; and next told her about an island, in a pond at Stylehurst, which had been by turns Ellen's isle and Robinson Crusoe's. It was at this point in the conversation that Guy came in sight, riding slowly, his reins on his horse's neck, whistling a slow, melancholy tune, his eyes fixed on the sky, and so lost in musings that he did not perceive them till Philip arrested him by calling out, "That is a very bad plan. No horse is to be trusted in that way, especially such a spirited one."

Guy started, and gathered up his reins, owning it was foolish.

"You look only half disenchanted yet," said Philip. "Has Lascelles put you into what my father's old gardener used to call a stud?"

"Nothing so worthy of a stud," said Guy, smiling and colouring a little. "I was only dreaming over a picture of ruin—

> "The steed is vanish'd from the stall,
> No serf is seen in Hassan's hall,
> The lonely spider's thin grey pall
> Waves, slowly widening o'er the wall."

"Byron!" exclaimed Philip, "I hope you are not dwelling on him!"

"Only a volume I found in my room."

"Oh, the *Giaour!*" said Philip. "Well, there is no great damage done; but it is bad food for excitable minds. Don't let it get hold of you."

"Very well;" and there was a cloud, but it cleared in a moment, and, with a few gay words to both, he rode off at a quick pace.

"Foolish fellow!" muttered Philip, looking after him.

After some space of silence, Charlotte began in a very grave tone—

"Philip."

"Well?"

"Philip."

Another "Well?" and another long pause.

"Philip, I don't know whether you'll be angry with me."

"Certainly not," said Philip, marvelling what was coming.

"Guy says he does not want to keep up the feud, and I wish you would not."

"What do you mean?"

"The deadly feud!" said Charlotte.

"What nonsense is this?" said Philip.

"Surely—O Philip, there always was a deadly feud between our ancestors and the Redclyffe Morvilles, and it was very wrong, and ought not to be kept up now."

"It is not I that keep it up."

"Is it not?" said Charlotte. "But I am sure you don't like Guy. And I can't think why not, unless it is the deadly feud, for we all are so fond of him. Laura says it is a different house since he came."

"Hum!" said Philip. "Charlotte, you did well to make me promise not to be angry with you, by which, I presume, you mean displeased. I should like to know what put this notion into your head."

"Charlie told me," almost whispered Charlotte, hanging down her head. "And—and—"

"And what? I can't hear."

Charlotte was a good deal frightened; but either from firmness, or from the female propensity to have the last word, or, it might be, the spirit of mischief, she got out—"You have made me quite sure of it yourself."

She was so alarmed at having said this, that had it not been undignified, she would have run quite away, and never stopped till she came to East Hill. Matters were not mended when Philip said authoritatively, and as if he was not in the least annoyed (which was the more vexatious), "What do you mean, Charlotte?"

She had a great mind to cry, by way of getting out of the scrape; but having begun as counsellor and peace-maker, it

would never do to be babyish, and on his repeating the question, she said in a tone which she could not prevent from being lachrymose, "You make Guy almost angry; you tease him, and when people praise him, you answer as if it would not last! And it is very unfair of you," concluded she, with almost a sob.

"Charlotte," replied Philip, much more kindly than she thought she deserved, after the reproach that seemed to her so dreadfully naughty, "you may dismiss all fear of deadly feud, whatever you may mean by it. Charles has been playing tricks upon you. You know, my little cousin, that I am a Christian, and we live in the nineteenth century."

Charlotte felt as if annihilated at the aspect of her own folly. He resumed, "You misunderstood me. I do think Guy very agreeable. He is very attentive to Charles, very kind to you, and so attractive, that I don't wonder you like him. But those who are older than you, see that he has faults, and we wish to set him on his guard against them. It may be painful to ourselves, and irritating to him, but depend upon it, it is the proof of friendship. Are you satisfied, my little cousin?"

She could humbly say, "I beg your pardon."

"You need not ask pardon. Since you had the notion, it was right to speak, as it was to me, one of your own family. When you are older, you need never fear to speak out in the right place. I am glad you have so much of the right sort of feminine courage, though in this case you might have ventured to trust to me."

So ended Charlotte's anxieties respecting the deadly feud; and she had now to make up her mind to the loss of her playfellow, who was to go to Oxford at Easter, when he would be just eighteen, his birthday being the 28th of March. Both her playmates were going, Bustle as well as Guy, and it was at first proposed that Deloraine should go too, but Guy bethought himself that Oxford would be a place of temptation for William; and not choosing to trust the horse to any one else, resolved to leave both at Hollywell.

His grandfather had left an allowance for Guy, until his coming of age, such as might leave no room for extravagance, and which even Philip pronounced to be hardly sufficient for a young man in his position. "You know," said Mr. Edmonstone, in his hesitating, good-natured way, "if ever you

have occasion sometimes for a little—a little more—you need only apply to me. Don't be afraid, any thing rather than run in debt. You know me, and 'tis your own."

"This shall do," said Guy, in the same tone as he had fixed his hours of study.

Each of the family made Guy a birthday present, as an outfit for Oxford; Mr. Edmonstone gave him a set of studs, Mrs. Edmonstone a Christian Year, Amabel copied some of his favourite songs, Laura made a drawing of Sintram, Charlotte worked a kettle-holder, with what was called by courtesy a likeness of Bustle. Charles gave nothing, professing that he would do nothing to encourage his departure.

"You don't know what a bore it is to lose the one bit of quicksilver in the house!" said he, yawning. "I shall only drag on my existence till you come back."

"You, Charles, the maker of fun!" said Guy, amazed.

"It is a case of flint and steel," said Charles; "but be it owing to who it will, we have been alive since you came here. You have taken care to be remembered. We have been studying you, or laughing at you, or wondering what absurdity was to come next."

"I am very sorry—that is, if you are serious. I hoped at least I appeared like other people."

"I'll tell you what you appear like. Just what I would be if I was a free man."

"Never say that, Charlie."

"Nay, wait a bit. I would never be so foolish. I would never give my sunny mornings to Euripides; I would not let the best hunter in the county go when I had wherewithal to pay for him."

"You would not have such an ill-conditioned self to keep in rule."

"After all," continued Charles, yawning, "it is no great compliment to say I am sorry you are going. If you were an Ethiopian serenader you would be a loss to me. It is something to see any thing beyond this old drawing-room, and the same faces doing the same things every day. Laura poking over her drawing, and meditating upon the last entry in Philip's memorandum-book, and Amy at her flowers or some nonsense or other, and Charlotte and the elders all the same, and a lot of stupid people dropping in, and a lot of stupid books to read, all just alike. I can tell what they are

like without looking in!" Charles yawned again, sighed, and moved wearily. "Now, there came some life and freshness with you. You talk of Redclyffe, and your brute creation there, not like a book, and still less like a commonplace man; you are innocent and unsophisticated, and take new points of view; you are something to interest oneself about; your coming in is something to look forward to; you make the singing not such mere milk and water; your reading the Prælectiones is an additional land-mark to time, besides the mutton of to-day succeeding the beef of yesterday. Heigh ho! I'll tell you what, Guy, though I may carry it off with a high hand, 'tis no joke to be a helpless log all the best years of a man's life,—nay, for my whole life,—for at the very best of the contingencies the doctors are always flattering me with, I should make but a wretched crippling affair of it. And if that is the best hope they give me, you may guess it is likely to be a pretty deal worse. Hope? I've been hoping these ten years, and much good has it done me. I say, Guy," he proceeded, in a tone of extreme bitterness, though with a sort of smile, "the only wonder is that I don't hate the very sight of you! There are times when I feel as if I could bite some men,—that tomfool Maurice de Courcy, for instance, when I hear him rattling on, and think——"

"I know I have often talked thoughtlessly, I have feared afterwards I might have given you pain."

"No, no, you never have; you have carried me along with you. I like nothing better than to hear of your ridings, and shootings, and boatings. It is a sort of life."

Charles had never till now alluded seriously to his infirmity before Guy, and the changing countenance of his auditor showed him to be much affected, as he stood leaning over the end of the sofa, with his speaking eyes earnestly fixed on Charles, who went on:

"And now you are going to Oxford. You will take your place among the men of your day. You will hear and be heard of. You will be somebody. And I!—I know I have what they call talent—I could be something. They think me an idle dog; but where's the good of doing any thing? I only know if I was not—not condemned to—to this—this life," (had it not been for a sort of involuntary respect to the gentle compassion of the softened hazel eyes regarding him so kindly, he would have used the violent expletive that trembled

on his lip;) "if I was not chained down here, master Philip should not stand alone as the paragon of the family. I've as much mother wit as he."

"That you have," said Guy. "How fast you see the sense of a passage. You could excel very much if you only tried."

"Tried? And what am I to gain by it?"

"I don't know that one ought to let talents rust," said Guy, thoughtfully; "I suppose it is one's duty not; and surely it is a pity to give up those readings."

"I shall not get such another fellow-dunce as you," said Charles, "as I told you when we began, and it would be a mere farce to do it alone. I could not make myself if I would."

"Can't you make yourself do what you please?" said Guy as if it was the simplest thing in the world.

"Not a bit, if the other half of me does not like it. I for get it, or put it off, and it comes to nothing. I do declare, though, I would get something to break my mind on, merely as a medical precaution, just to freshen myself up, if I could find any one to do it with. No, nothing in the shape of a tutor; against that I protest."

"Your sisters," suggested Guy.

"Hum! Laura is too intellectual already, and I don't mean to poach on Philip's manor; and if I made little Amy cease to be silly, I should do away with all the comfort I have left me in life. I don't know, though, if she swallowed learning after Mary Ross's pattern, that it need do her much harm."

Amy came into the room at the moment.

"Amy, here is Guy advising me to take you to read something awfully wise every day. Something that will make you as dry as a stick, and as blue——"

"As a gentianella," said Guy.

"I should not mind being like a gentianella," said Amy. "But what dreadful thing were you setting him to do?"

"To make you read all the folios in my uncle's old library," said Charles. "All that Margaret has in keeping against Philip has a house of his own."

"Sancho somebody, and all you talked of when first you came?" said Amy.

"We were talking of the hour's reading that Charlie and I have had together lately," said Guy.

"I was thinking how Charlie would miss that hour,' said

Amy; "and we shall be very sorry not to have you to listen to."

"Well, then, Amy, suppose you read with me?"

"O Charlie, thank you! Should you really like it?" cried Amy, colouring with delight. "I have always thought it would be so very delightful if you would read with me, as James Ross used with Mary, only I was afraid of tiring you with my stupidity. Oh, thank you!"

So it was settled, and Charles declared that he put himself on honour to give a good account of their doings to Guy, that being the only way of making himself steady to his resolution; but he was perfectly determined not to let Philip know any thing about the practice he had adopted, since he would by no means allow him to guess that he was following his advice.

Charles had certainly grown very fond of Guy, in spite of his propensity to admire Philip, satisfying himself by maintaining that, after all, Guy only tried to esteem his cousin because he thought it a point of duty, just as children think it right to admire the good boy in a story-book; but that he was secretly fretted and chafed by his perfection. No one could deny that there were often occasions when little misunderstandings would arise, and that but for Philip's coolness and Guy's readiness to apologize, they might often have gone further; but at the same time no one could regret these things more than Guy himself, and he was willing and desirous to seek Philip's advice and assistance when needed. In especial, he listened earnestly to the counsel which was bestowed on him about Oxford; and Mrs. Edmonstone was convinced that no one could have more anxiety to do right and avoid temptation. She had many talks with him in her dressing-room, promising to write to him, as did also Charles; and he left Hollywell with universal regrets, most loudly expressed by Charlotte, who would not be comforted without a lock of Bustle's hair, which she would have worn round her neck if she had not been afraid that Laura would tell Philip.

"He goes with excellent intentions," said Philip, as they watched him from the door.

"I do hope he will do well," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"I wish he may," said Philip, "the agreeableness of his whole character makes one more anxious. It is very dangerous! His name, his wealth, his sociable, gay disposition,

that very attractive manner, all are so many perils, and he has not that natural pleasure in study that would be of itself a preservative from temptation. However, he is honestly anxious to do right, and has excellent principles. I only fear his temper and his want of steadiness. Poor boy, I hope he may do well!"

CHAPTER VII.

——Pray, good shepherd, what
Fair swain is this that dances with your daughter?
* * * * *
He sings several tunes faster than you'll tell money; he utters them as he had eaten ballads, and all men's ears grow to his tunes.

WINTER'S TALE.

IT was a glorious day in June, the sky of pure, deep, dazzling blue, the sunshine glowing with brightness, but with cheerful freshness in the air that took away all sultriness, the sun tending westward in his long day's career, and casting welcome shadows from the tall firs and horse-chestnuts that shaded the lawn. A long rank of haymakers—men and women—proceeded with their rakes, the white shirt-sleeves, straw bonnets, and ruddy faces, radiant in the bath of sunshine, while in the shady end of the field were idler haymakers among the fragrant piles, Charles half lying on the grass, with his back against a tall hay-cock; Mrs. Edmonstone sitting on another, book in hand; Laura sketching the busy scene, the sun glancing through the chequered shade on her glossy curls; Philip stretched out at full length, hat and neck-tie off, luxuriating in the cool repose after a dusty walk from Broadstone; and a little way off, Amabel and Charlotte pretending to make hay, but really building nests with it, throwing it at each other, and playing as heartily as the heat would allow.

They talked and laughed, the rest were too hot, too busy, or too sleepy for conversation, even Philip being tired into enjoying the *dolce far niente;* and they basked in the fresh breezy heat and perfumy hay with only now and then a word, till a cold, black, damp nose was suddenly thrust into Charles's face, a red tongue began licking him; and at the same mo

ment Charlotte, screaming, "There he is!" raced headlong across the swarths of hay to meet Guy, who had just ridden into the field. He threw Deloraine's rein to one of the haymakers, and came bounding to meet her, just in time to pick her up as she put her foot into a hidden hole, and fell prostrate.

In another moment he was in the midst of the whole party, who crowded round and welcomed him as if he had been a boy returning from his first half-year's schooling; and never did little schoolboy look more holiday-like than he, with all the sunshine of that June day reflected, as it were, in his glittering eyes and glowing face, while Bustle, escaping from Charles's caressing arm, danced round, wagging his tail in ecstacy, and claiming his share of the welcome. Then Guy was on the ground by Charles, rejoicing to find him out there, and then, some dropping into their former nests on the hay, some standing round, they talked fast and eagerly in a confusion of sound that did not subside for the first ten minutes so as to allow any thing to be clearly heard. The first distinct sentence was Charlotte's, "Bustle, darling old fellow, you are handsomer than ever!"

"What a delicious day!" next exclaimed Guy, following Philip's example, by throwing off hat and neck-tie.

"A spontaneous tribute to the beauty of the day," said Charles.

"Really it is so ultra-splendid as to deserve notice!" said Philip, throwing himself completely back, and looking up.

"One cannot help revelling in that deep blue!" said Laura.

"To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the glad new year," hummed Guy.

"Ah! you will teach us all now," said Laura, "after your grand singing lessons."

"Do you know what is in store for you, Guy?" said Amy. "Oh! haven't you heard about Lady Kilcoran's ball!"

"You are to go, Guy," said Charlotte. "I am glad I am not. I hate dancing."

"And I know as much about it as Bustle," said Guy, catching the dog by his forepaws, and causing him to perform an uncouth dance.

"Never mind, they will soon teach you," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"Must I really go?"

"He begins to think it serious," said Charles.

"Is Philip going?" exclaimed Guy, looking as if he was taken by surprise.

"He is going to say something about dancing being a healthful recreation for young people," said Charles.

"You'll be disappointed," said Philip. "It is much too hot to moralize."

"Apollo unbends his bow," exclaimed Charles. "The captain yields the field."

"Ah! Captain Morville, I ought to have congratulated you," said Guy. "I must come to Broadstone early enough to see you on parade."

"Come to Broadstone! You aren't still bound to Mr. Lascelles," said Charles.

"If he has time for me," said Guy. "I am too far behind the rest of the world to afford to be idle this vacation."

"That's right, Guy," exclaimed Philip, sitting up, and looking full of approval. "With so much perseverance, you must get on at last. How did you do in collection?"

"Tolerably, thank you."

"You must be able to enter into the thing now," proceeded Philip. "What are you reading?"

"Thucydides."

"Have you come to Pericles' oration? I must show you some notes that I have on that. Don't you get into the spirit of it now?"

"Up hill work still," answered Guy, disentangling some *cliders* from the silky curls of Bustle's ear.

"Which do you like best—that or the ball?" asked Charles.

"The hay-field best of all," said Guy, releasing Bustle, and blinding him with a heap of hay.

"Of course!" said Charlotte, "who would not like hay-making better than that stupid ball?"

"Poor Charlotte!" said Mrs. Edmonstone, commiseration which irritated Charlotte into standing up and protesting, "Mamma, you know I don't want to go."

"No more do I, Charlotte," said her brother, in a mock consoling tone. "You and I know what is good for us, and despise sublunary vanities."

"But you will go, Guy," said Laura; "Philip is really going."

"In spite of Lord Kilcoran's folly in going to such an expense as either taking Allonby or giving the ball," said Charles.

"I don't think it is my business to bring Lord Kilcoran to a sense of his folly," said Philip. "I made all my protests to Maurice when first he started the notion, but if his father chose to take the matter up, it is no concern of mine."

"You will understand, Guy," said Charles, "that this ball is especially got up by Maurice for Laura's benefit."

"Believe as little as you please of that speech, Guy," said Laura; "the truth is, that Lord Kilcoran is very good-natured, and Eveleen was very much shocked to hear that Amy had never been to any ball, and I to only one, and so it ended in their giving one."

"When is it to be?"

"On Thursday week," said Amy. "I wonder if you will think Eveleen as pretty as we do!"

"She is Laura's great friend, is she not?"

"I like her very much; I have known her all my life, and she has much more depth than those would think who only know her manner." And Laura looked pleadingly at Philip as she spoke.

"Are there any others of the family at home?" said Guy.

"The two younger girls, Mabel and Helen, and the little boys," said Amy. "Lord de Courcy is in Ireland, and all the others are away."

"Lord de Courcy is the wisest man of the family, and sets his face against absenteeism," said Philip, "so he is never visible here."

"But you aren't going to despise it, I hope, Guy," said Amy, earnestly; "it will be so delightful! And what fun we shall have in teaching you to dance!"

Guy stretched himself, and gave a quaint grunt.

"Never mind, Guy," said Philip, "very little is required. You may easily pass in the crowd. I never learnt."

"Your ear will guide you," said Laura.

"And no one can stay at home, since Mary Ross is going," said Amy. "Eveleen was always so fond of her, that she

came and forced a promise from her, by telling her she should come with mamma, and have no trouble."

"You have not seen Allonby," said Laura. "There are such Vandykes, and among them, such a King Charles!"

"Is not that the picture," said Charles, "before which Amy—"

"O don't, Charlie!"

"Was found dissolved in tears?"

"I could not help it," murmured Amy, blushing crimson.

"There is all Charles's fate in his face," said Philip,—"earnest, melancholy, beautiful! It would stir the feelings—were it an unknown portrait. No, Amy, you need not be ashamed of your tears."

But Amy turned away, doubly ashamed.

"I hope it is not in the ball-room," said Guy.

"No," said Laura, "it is in the library."

Charlotte, whose absence had become perceptible from the general quietness, here ran up with two envelopes, which she put into Guy's hand. One was Lady Kilcoran's genuine card of invitation for Sir Guy Morville, the other Charlotte had scribbled in haste, for Mr. Bustle.

This put an end to all rationality. Guy rose with a growl and a roar, and hunted her over half the field, till she was caught, and came back out of breath and screaming, "We never had such a haymaking!"

"So I think the haymakers will say!" answered her mother, rising to go indoors. "What ruin of haycocks!"

"Oh, I'll set all that to rights," said Guy, seizing a hayfork.

"Stop, stop, take care!" cried Charles. "I don't want to be built up in the rick, and by and by, when my disconsolate family have had all the ponds dragged for me, Deloraine will be heard to complain that they give him very odd animal food!"

"Who could resist such a piteous appeal?" said Guy, helping him to rise, and conducting him to his wheeled chair. The others followed, and when, shortly after, Laura looked out at her window, she saw Guy, with his coat off, toiling, like a real haymaker, to build up the cocks in all their neat fairness and height, whistling meantime the "Queen of the May," and now and then singing a line. She watched the old cowman come up, touching his hat, and looking less cross than usual; she saw Guy's ready greeting, and their comparison of the

forks and rakes, the pooks and cocks of their counties; and, finally, she beheld her father ride into the field, and Guy spring to meet him.

No one could have so returned to what was in effect a home, unless his time had been properly spent; and, in fact, all that Mr. Edmonstone or Philip could hear of him was so satisfactory, that Philip pronounced that the first stage of the trial had been passed irreproachably, and Laura felt and looked delighted at this sanction to the high estimation in which she held him.

His own account of himself to Mrs. Edmonstone would not have been equally satisfactory if she had not had something else to check it with. It was given by degrees, and at many different times, chiefly as they walked round the garden in the twilight of the summer's evenings, talking over the many subjects mentioned in the letters which had passed constantly. It seemed as if there were very few to whom Guy would ever give his confidence; but that once bestowed, it was with hardly any reserve, and that it was his great relief and satisfaction to pour out his whole mind, where he was sure of sympathy.

To her, then, he confided how much provoked he was with himself, his "first term," he said, "having only shown him what an intolerable fool he had to keep in order." By his account, he could do nothing "without turning his own head, except study, and that stupified it." "Never was there a more idle fellow;" he could work himself for a given time, but his sense would not second him; and, was it not absurd in him to take so little pleasure in what was his duty, and enjoy only what was bad for him?"

He had tried boating, but it had distracted him from his work; so he had been obliged to give it up, and had done so in a hasty, vehement manner, which had caused offence, and for which he blamed himself. It had been the same with other things, till he had left himself no regular recreation but walking and music. "The last," he said, "might engross him in the same way; but he thought (here he hesitated a little) there were higher ends for music, which made it come under Mrs. Edmonstone's rule, of a thing to be used guardedly, not disused." He had resumed light reading, too, which he had nearly discontinued before he went to Oxford. "One wants something," he said, "by way of refreshment, where

there is no sea nor rock to look at, and no Laura and Amy to talk to."

He had made one friend, a scholar of his own college, of the name of Wellwood. This name had been his attraction; Guy was bent on friendship with him; if, as he tried to make him out to be, he was the son of that Captain Wellwood, whose death had weighed so heavily on his grandfather's conscience, feeling almost as if it were his duty to ask forgiveness in his grandfather's name, yet scarcely knowing how to venture on advances to one to whom his name had such associations. However, they had gradually drawn together, and at length entered on the subject, and Guy then found he was the nephew, not the son, of Captain Wellwood; indeed, his former belief was founded on a miscalculation, as the duel was twenty-eight years ago. He now heard all his grandfather had wished to know of the family. There were two unmarried daughters, and their cousin spoke in the highest terms of their self-devoted life, promising, what Guy much wished, that they should hear what deep repentance had followed the crime which had made them fatherless. He was to be a clergyman, and Guy admired him extremely, saying, however, that he was so shy and retiring, it was hard to know him well.

From not having been at school, and from other causes, Guy had made few acquaintance; indeed, he amused Mrs. Edmonstone by fearing he had been morose. She was ready to tell him he was an ingenious self-tormentor; but she saw that the struggle to do right was the mainspring of the happiness that beamed round him, in spite of his self-reproach, heart-felt as it was. She doubted whether persons more contented with themselves were as truly joyous, and was convinced that, whilst thus combating lesser temptations, the very shadow of what are generally alone considered as real temptations, would hardly come near him.

If it had not been for these talks, and now and then a thoughtful look, she would have believed him one of the most light-hearted and merriest of beings. He was more full of glee and high spirits than she had ever seen him; he seemed to fill the whole house with mirth, and keep every one alive by his fun and frolic, as blithe and untiring as Maurice de Courcy himself, though not so wild.

Very pleasant were those summer days—reading, walking, music, gardening. Did not they all work like very

labourers at the new arbour in the midst of the laurels, where Charles might sit and see the spires of Broadstone? Work they did, indeed! Charles looking on from his wheeled chair laughing to see Guy sawing as if for his living, and Amy hammering gallantly, and Laura weaving osiers, and Charlotte flying about with messages.

One day, they were startled by an exclamation from Charles. "Ah, ha! Paddy, is that you?" and beheld the tall figure of a girl, advancing with a rapid, springing step, holding up her riding habit with one hand, with the other, whisking her coral-handled whip. There was something distinguished in her air, and her features, though less fine than Laura's, were very pretty, by the help of laughing dark blue eyes, and very black hair, under her broad hat and little waving feather. She threatened Charles with her whip, calling out—"Aunt Edmonstone said I should find you here. What is the fun now?"

"Arbour building," said Charles; "don't you see the head carpenter?"

"Sir Guy?" whispered she, to Laura, looking up at him, where he was mounted on the roof, thatching it with reed, the sunshine full on his glowing face, and white shirt-sleeves.

"Here!" said Charles, as Guy swung himself down with a bound, his face much redder than sun and work had already made it, "here's another wild Irisher for you."

"Sir Guy Morville—Lady Eveleen de Courcy," began Laura; but Lady Eveleen cut her short, frankly holding out her hand, and saying, "You are almost a cousin, you know. Oh, don't leave off. Do give me something to do. That hammer, Amy, pray—Laura, don't you remember how dearly I always loved hammering?"

"How did you come?" said Laura.

"With papa—'tis his visit to Sir Guy. No, don't go," as Guy began to look for his coat; "he is only impending. He is gone on to Broadstone, but he dropped me here, and will pick me up on his way back. Can't you give me something to do on the top of that ladder? I should like it mightily; it looks so cool and airy."

"How can you, Eva?" whispered Laura, reprovingly; but Lady Eveleen only shook her head at her, and declaring she saw a dangerous nail sticking out, began to hammer it in with such good will, that Charles stopped his ears, and told

her it was worse than her tongue. "Go on about the ball, do."

"Oh," said she, earnestly, "do you think there is any hope of Captain Morville's coming?"

"Oh yes," said Laura.

"I am so glad! That is what papa is gone to Broadstone about. Maurice said he had given him such a lecture, that he would not be the one to think of asking him, and papa must do it himself, for if he sets his face against it, it will spoil it all."

"You may make your mind easy," said Charles, "the captain is lenient, and looks on the ball as a mere development of Irish nature. He has been consoling Guy on the difficulties of dancing."

"Can't you dance?" said Lady Eveleen, looking at him with compassion.

"Such is my melancholy ignorance," said Guy.

"We have been talking of teaching him," said Laura.

"Talk! will that do it?" cried Lady Eveleen, springing up. "We will begin this moment. Come out on the lawn. Here, Charles," wheeling him along. "No, thank you, I like it," as Guy was going to help her. "There, Charles, be fiddler; go on, tum—tum, tee; that'll do. Amy, Laura, be ladies. I'm the other gentleman," and she stuck on her hat in military style, giving it a cock. She actually set them quadrilling in spite of adverse circumstances, dancing better, in her habit, than most people without one, till Lord Kilcoran arrived.

While he was making his visit, she walked a little apart, arm in arm with Laura. "I like him very much," she said; "he looks up to any thing. I had heard so much of his steadiness, that it is a great relief to my mind to see him so unlike his cousin."

"Eveleen!"

"No disparagement to the captain, only I am so dreadfully afraid of him. I am sure he thinks me such an unmitigated goose. Now, doesn't he?"

"If you would but take the right way to make him think otherwise, dear Eva, and show the sense you really have."

"That is just what my fear of him won't let me do. I would not for the world let him guess it, so there is nothing

for it but sauciness to cover one's weakness. I can't be sensible with those that won't give me credit for it. But you'll mind and teach Sir Guy to dance; he has so much spring in him, he deserves to be an Irishman."

In compliance with this injunction, there used to be a clearance every evening; Charles turned into the bay window out of the way, Mrs. Edmonstone at the piano, and the rest figuring away, the partnerless one, called "puss in the corner," being generally Amabel, while Charlotte, disdaining them all the time, used to try to make them imitate her dancing-master's graces, causing her father to perform such caricatures of them as to overpower all with laughing.

Mr. Edmonstone was half Irish. His mother, Lady Mabel Edmonstone, had never thoroughly taken root in England, and on his marriage, had gone with her daughter, to live near the old home in Ireland. The present Earl of Kilcoran was her nephew, and a very close intercourse had always been kept up between the families, Mr. and Mrs. Edmonstone being adopted by their younger cousins as uncle and aunt, and always so called.

The house at Allonby was in such confusion, that the family there expected to dine nowhere on the day of the ball; and the Hollywell party thought it prudent to secure their dinner at home, with Philip and Mary Ross, who were to go with them.

By special desire, Philip wore his uniform; and while the sisters were dressing, Charlotte gave him a thorough examination which led to a talk between him and Mary on accoutrements and weapons in general; but while deep in some points of chivalrous armour, Mary's waist was pinched by two mischievous hands, and a little fluttering white figure danced round her.

"O Amy! what do you want with me?"

"Come and be trimmed up," said Amy.

"I thought you told me I was to have no trouble. I am dressed," said Mary, looking complacently at her full folds of white muslin.

"No more you shall; but you promised to do as you were told." And Amy fluttered away with her.

"Do you remember," said Philip, "the comparison of Rose Flammock dragging off her father, to a little carved cherub trying to uplift a solid monumental hero?"

"O, I must tell Mary," cried Charlotte; but Philip stopped her, with orders not to be a silly child.

"It is a pity Amy should not have her share," said Charles.

"The comparison to a Dutch cherub?" asked Guy.

"She is more after the pattern of the little things on little wings, in your blotting-book," said Charles; "certain lines in the predicament of the cherubs of painters—heads *et præterea nihil.*"

"O Guy, do you write verses?" cried Charlotte.

"Some nonsense," muttered Guy, out of countenance; I thought I had made away with that rubbish; where is it?"

"In the blotting-book in my room," said Charles. "I must explain that the book is my property, and was put into your room when mamma was beautifying it for you, as new and strange company. On its return to me, at your departure, I discovered a great accession of blots and sailing-vessels, besides the aforesaid little things."

"I shall resume my own property," said Guy, departing in haste.

Charlotte ran after him, to beg for a sight of it; and Philip asked Charles what it was like?

"A romantic incident," said Charles, "just fit for a novel. A Petrarch leaving his poems about in blotting books."

Charles used the word Petrarch to stand for a poet, not thinking what lady's name it suggested; and he was surprised at the severity of Philip's tone as he inquired,

"Do you mean any thing, or do you not?"

Perceiving with delight that he had perplexed and teased, he rejoiced in keeping up the mystery:

"Eh? is it a tender subject with you, too?"

Philip rose, and standing over him, said, in a low but impressive tone:

"I cannot tell whether you are trifling or not; but you are no boy now, and can surely see that this is no subject to be played with. If you are concealing any thing you have discovered, you have a great deal to answer for. I can hardly imagine any thing more unfortunate than that he should become attached to either of your sisters?"

"Et pourquoi?" asked Charles, coolly.

"I see," said Philip, retreating to his chair, and speaking

with great composure, "I did you injustice by speaking seriously." Then, as his uncle came into the room, he asked some indifferent question, without betraying a shade of annoyance.

Charles meanwhile congratulated himself on his valour in keeping his counsel, in spite of so tall a man in scarlet; but he was much nettled at the last speech; for if a real attachment to his sister had been in question he would never have trifled about it. Keenly alive to his cousin's injustice, he rejoiced in having provoked and mystified the impassible, though he little knew the storm he had raised beneath that serene exterior of perfect self-command.

The carriages were announced, and Mr. Edmonstone began to call the ladies, adding tenfold to the confusion in the dressing-room. There was Laura being completed by the lady's maid, Amabel embellishing Mary, Mrs. Edmonstone with her arm loaded with shawls, Charlotte flourishing about. Poor Mary—it was much against her will—but she had no heart to refuse the wreath of geraniums that Amy's own hands had woven for her; and there she sat, passive as a doll, though in despair at their all waiting for her. For Laura's toilette was finished, and every one began dressing her at once; while Charlotte, to make it better, screamed over the balusters that all were ready but Mary. Sir Guy was heard playing the 'Harmonious Blacksmith,' and Captain Morville's step was heard, fast and firm. At last, when a long chain was put round her neck, she cried out, "I have submitted to every thing so far; I can bear no more!" jumped up, caught hold of her shawl, and was putting it on, when there was a general outcry that they must exhibit themselves to Charles.

They all ran down, and Amy, flying up to her brother, made a splendid sweeping curtsey, and twirled round in a pirouette.

"Got up regardless of expense!" cried Charles; "display yourselves."

The young ladies ranged themselves in imitation of the book of fashions. The sisters were in white, with wreaths of starry jessamine. It was particularly becoming to Laura's bella-donna lily complexion, rich brown curls, and classical features; and her brother exclaimed:

"Laura is exactly like Apollo playing the lyre, outside mamma's old manuscript book of music."

"Has not Amy made beautiful wreaths?' said Laura. "She stripped the tree, and Guy had to fetch the ladder, to gather the sprays on the top of the wall."

"Do you see your bit of myrtle, Guy," said Amy, pointing to it, on Laura's head, "that you tried to persuade me would pass for jessamine?"

"Ah! it should have been all myrtle," said Guy.

Philip leant meantime against the door. Laura only once glanced towards him, thinking all this too trifling for him, and never imagining the intense interest with which he gave a meaning to each word and look.

"Well done, Mary!" cried Charles, "they have furbished you up handsomely."

Mary made a face, and said she should wonder who was the fashionable young lady she should meet in the pier-glasses at Allonby. Then Mr. Edmonstone hurried them away, and they arrived in due time.

The saloon at Allonby was a beautiful room, one end opening into a conservatory, full of coloured lamps, fresh green leaves, and hot-house plants. There they found as yet only the home party, the good-natured, merry Lord Kilcoran, his quiet English wife, who had bad health, and looked hardly equal to the confusion of the evening; Maurice, and two younger boys; Eveleen, and her two little sisters, Mabel and Helen.

"This makes it hard on Charlotte," thought Amy, while the two girls dragged her off to show her the lamps in the conservatory; and the rest attacked Mrs. Edmonstone for not having brought Charlotte, reproaching her with hardness of heart of which they had never believed her capable—Lady Eveleen, in especial, talking with that exaggeration of her ordinary manner which her dread of Captain Morville made her assume. Little he recked of her; he was absorbed in observing how far Laura's conduct coincided with Charles's hints. On the first opportunity, he asked her to dance, and was satisfied with her pleased acquiescence; but the next moment, Guy came up, and in an eager manner, made the same request.

"I am engaged," said she, with a bright, proud glance at Philip; and Guy pursued Amabel into the conservatory, where he met with better success. Mr. Edmonstone gallantly asked Mary if he was too old a partner, and was soon

dancing, with the step and spring that had once made him the best dancer in the county.

Mrs. Edmonstone watched her flock, proud and pleased, thinking how well they looked, and that, in especial, she had never been sensible how much Laura's and Philip's good looks excelled the rest of the world. They were much alike in the remarkable symmetry both of figure and feature, the colour of the deep blue eye, and fairness of complexion.

"It is curious," thought Mrs. Edmonstone, "that, so very handsome as Philip is, it is never the first thing remarked about him, just as his height never is observed till he is compared with other people. The fact is, that his superior sense carries off a degree of beauty which would be a misfortune to most men. It is that sedate expression and distinguished air that makes the impression. How happy Laura looks, how gracefully she moves. No, it is not being foolish to think no one equal to Laura. My other pair!" and she smiled much more, "you happy young things, I would not wish to see any thing pleasanter than your merry faces. Little Amy looks almost as pretty as Laura, now she is lighted up by blush and smile, and her dancing is very nice; it is just like her laughing, so quiet, and yet so full of glee. I don't think she is less graceful than her sister, but the complete enjoyment strikes one more. And as to enjoyment—there are those bright eyes of her partner's perfectly sparkling with delight; he looks as if it was a world of enchantment to him. Never had any one a greater capacity for happiness than Guy!"

"Mrs. Edmonstone might well retain her opinion when, after the quadrille, Guy came to tell her that he had never seen any thing so delightful; and he entertained Mary Ross with his fresh, joyous pleasure, through the next dance.

Laura," whispered Eveleen, "I've one ambition. Do you guess it? Don't tell him; but if he would, I should have a better opinion of myself ever after. I'm afraid he'll depreciate me to his friend; and really with Mr. Thorndale, I was no more foolish than a ball requires."

Lady Eveleen hoped in vain. Captain Morville danced with little Lady Helen, a child of eleven, who was enchanted at having so tall a partner; then, after standing still for some time, chose his cousin Amabel.

"You are a good partner and neighbour," said he, giving her his arm, "you don't want young lady talk."

"Should you not have asked Mary? She has been sitting down this long time."

"Do you think that she cares for such a sport as dancing?"

Amy made no answer.

"You have been well off. You were dancing with Thorndale just now."

"Yes. It was refreshing to have an old acquaintance among so many strangers. And he is so delighted with Eveleen; but what is more, Philip, that Mr. Vernon, who is dancing with Laura, told Maurice he thought her the prettiest and most elegant person here."

"Laura might have higher praise," said Philip, "for hers is beauty of countenance even more than of feature. If only—"

"If?" said Amy.

"Look round, Amy, and you will see many a face which speaks of intellect wasted, or if cultivated, turned aside from its true purpose, like the double blossom, which bears leaves alone."

"Ah! you forget you are talking to silly little Amy. I can't see all that. I had rather think people as happy and good as they look."

"Keep your child-like temper as long as you can—all your life, perhaps, for this is one of the points where it is folly to be wise."

"Then you only meant things in general. Nothing about Laura?"

"Things in general," repeated Philip; "bright promises blighted or thrown away—"

But he spoke absently, and his eye was following Laura.

Amy thought he was thinking of his sister, and was sorry for him. He spoke no more, but he did not regret it, for she could not moralize in such a scene, and the sight and the dancing were pleasure enough.

Guy, in the mean time, had met an Oxford acquaintance, who introduced him to his sisters—pretty girls—whose father Mr. Edmonstone knew, but who was rather out of the Holly well visiting distance. They fell into conversation quickly, and the Miss Alstons asked him with some interest, "Which

the pretty Miss Edmonstone?" Guy looked for the sisters, as if to make up his mind, for the fact was, that when he first knew Laura and Amy the idea of criticising beauty had not entered his mind, and to compare them was quite a new notion. "Nay," said he at last, "if you cannot discover for yourselves when they are both before your eyes, I will do nothing so invidious as to say which is *the* pretty one. I'll tell which is the eldest and which is the youngest, but the rest you must decide for yourself."

"I should like to know them," said Miss Alston. "Oh! they are both very nice-looking girls."

"There, that is Laura—Miss Edmonstone," said Guy, "that tall young lady with the beautiful hair and jessamine wreath."

He spoke as if he was proud of her, and had a property in her. The tone did not escape Philip, who at that moment was close to them, with Amy on his arm; and, knowing the Alstons slightly, stopped and spoke, and introduced his cousin, Miss Amabel Edmonstone. At the same time Guy took one of the Miss Alstons away to get some tea.

"So you knew my cousin at Oxford?" said Philip to the brother.

"Yes, slightly. What an amusing fellow he is!"

"There is something very bright, very unlike other people, about him," said Miss Alston.

"How does he get on? Is he liked?"

"Why, yes, I should say so, on the whole; but it is rather as my sister says, he is not like other people."

"In what respect?"

"Oh! I can hardly tell. He is a very pleasant person, but he ought to have been at school. He is a man of crotchets."

"Hard-working?"

"Very; he makes every thing give way to that. He is a capital companion when he is to be had, but he lives very much to himself. He is a man of one friend, and I don't see much of him."

Another dance began, Mr. Alston went to look for his partner, Philip and Amy moved on in search of ice. "Hum!" said Philip to himself, causing Amy to gaze up at him, but he was musing too intently for her to venture on a remark. She was thinking that she did not wonder that strangers deemed

Guy crotchety, since he was so difficult to understand; and then she considered whether to take him to see King Charles, in the library, and concluded that she would wait, for she felt as if the martyr king's face would look on her too gravely to suit her present tone.

Philip helped her to ice, and brought her back to her mother's neighbourhood, without many more words. He then stood thoughtful for some time, entered into conversation with one of the elder gentlemen, and, when that was interrupted, turned to talk to his aunt.

Lady Eveleen and her two cousins were for a moment together. "What is the matter, Eva?" said Amy, seeing a sort of dissatisfaction on her bright face.

"The roc's egg?" said Laura, smiling. "The queen of the evening can't be content—"

"No; you are the queen, if the one thing can make you so—the one thing wanting to me."

"How absurd you are, Eva—when you say you are so afraid of him, too."

"That is the very reason. I should get a better opinion of myself! Besides, there is nobody else so handsome. I declare I'll make a bold attempt."

"Oh! you don't think of such a thing," cried Laura, very much shocked.

"Never fear," said Eveleen, "faint heart, you know." And with a nod, a flourish of her bouquet, and an arch smile at her cousin's horror, she moved on, and presently they heard her exclaiming, gaily, "Captain Morville, I really must scold you. You are setting a shocking example of laziness! Aunt Edmonstone, how can you encourage such proceedings! Indolence is the parent of vice, you know."

Philip smiled just as much as the occasion required, and answered, "I beg your pardon, I had forgotten my duty. I'll attend to my business better in future." And turning to a small, shy damsel, who seldom met with a partner, he asked her to dance. Eveleen came back to Laura with a droll, disappointed gesture. "Insult to injury," said she, disconsolately.

"Of course," said Amy, "he could not have thought you wanted to dance with him, or you would not have gone to stir him up."

"Well, then, he was very obtuse!"

"Besides, you are engaged."

"Oh, yes, to Mr. Thorndale! but who would be content with the squire when the knight disdains her?"

Mr. Thorndale came to claim Eveleen at that moment. It was the second time she had danced with him, and it did not pass unobserved by Philip, nor the long walk up and down after the dance was over. At length his friend came up to him, and said something warm in admiration of her. "She is very Irish," was Philip's answer, with a cold smile, and Mr. Thorndale stood uncomfortable under the disapprobation, attracted by Eveleen's beauty and grace, yet so unused to trust his own judgment apart from "Morville's," as to be in an instant doubtful whether he really admired or not.

"You have not been dancing with her?" he said, presently.

"No—she attracts too many to need the attention of a nobody like myself."

That "too many," seeming to confound him with the vulgar herd, made Mr. Thorndale heartily ashamed of having been pleased with her.

Philip was easy about him for the present, satisfied that admiration had been checked, which, if it had been allowed to grow into an attachment, would have been very undesirable.

The suspicions Charles had excited were so full in Philip's mind, however, that he could not as easily set it at rest respecting his cousin. Guy had three times asked her to dance, but each time she had been engaged. At last, just as the clock struck the hour at which the carriage had been ordered, he came up and impetuously claimed her. "One quadrille we must have, Laura! if you are not tired?"

"No! O no! I could dance till this time to-morrow."

"We ought to be going," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"O pray, Mrs. Edmonstone, this one more," cried Guy, eagerly. "Laura owes me this one!"

"Yes, this one more, mamma," said Laura, and they went off together, while Philip remained, in a reverie, till requested by his aunt to see if the carriage was ready.

The dance was over, the carriage was waiting, but Guy and Laura did not appear till, after two or three minutes spent in wonder and inquiries, they came quietly walking back from the library, where they had been looking at King Charles.

All the way home the four ladies in their carriage never ceased laughing and talking. The three gentlemen in theirs acted diversely. Mr. Edmonstone went to sleep, Philip sat in silent thought, Guy whistled and hummed the tunes, and moved his foot very much as if he was still dancing.

They met for a moment, and parted again in the hall at Hollywell, where the daylight was striving to get in through the closed shutters. Philip went on to Broadstone, Guy said he could not go to bed by daylight, called Bustle, and went to the river to bathe, and the rest crept up-stairs to their rooms. And so ended Lord Kilcoran's ball.

CHAPTER VIII.

Like Alexander, I will reign,
  And I will reign alone,
My thoughts shall ever more disdain
  A rival near my throne.
But I must rule and govern still,
  And always give the law,
And have each subject at my will,
  And all to stand in awe.

MONTROSE.

ONE very hot afternoon, shortly after the ball, Captain Morville walked to Hollywell, accelerating his pace under the influence of anxious reflections.

He could not determine whether Charles had spoken in jest; but, in spite of Guy's extreme youth, he feared there was ground for the suspicion excited by the hint, and was persuaded that such an attachment could produce nothing but unhappiness to his cousin, considering how little confidence could be placed in Guy. He perceived that there was much to inspire affection—attractive qualities, amiable disposition, the talent for music, and how this recently discovered power of versifying, all were in Guy's favour, besides the ancient name and long ancestry which conferred a romantic interest, and caused even Philip to look up to him with a feudal feeling as head of the family. There was also the familiar intercourse to increase the danger; and Philip, as he reflected on these things, trembled for Laura, and felt himself her only protector; for his uncle was nobody, Mrs. Edmonstone was infatuated, and Charles would not listen to reason. To make every thing worse, he had that morning heard that there was to be a grand inspection of the regiment and a presentation of colours; Colonel Deane was very anxious, and it was plain that in the interval the officers would be allowed little

leisure. The whole affair was to end with a ball, which would lead to a repetition of what had already disturbed him.

Thus meditating, Philip, heated and dusty, walked into the smooth green enclosure of Hollywell. Every thing, save the dancing clouds of insect youth which whirled in his face, was drooping in the heat. The house—every door and window opened—seemed gasping for breath; the cows sought refuge in the shade; the pony drooped its head drowsily; the leaves hung wearily; the flowers were faint and thirsty; and Bustle was stretched on the stone steps, mouth open, tongue out, only his tail now and then moving, till he put back his ears and crested his head to greet the arrival. Philip heard the sounds that had caused the motion of the sympathizing tail,—the rich tones of Guy's voice. Stepping over the dog, he entered, and heard more clearly—

> "Two loving hearts may sever,
> For sorrow fails them never."

And then another voice—

> "Who knows not love in sorrow's night,
> He knows not love in light."

In the drawing-room, cool and comfortable in the green shade of the Venetian blinds of the bay window, stood Laura, leaning on the piano, close to Guy, who sat on the music-stool, looking thoroughly at home in his brown shooting-coat and loosely-tied handkerchief.

Any one but Philip would have been out of temper, but he shook hands as cordially as usual, and would not even be the first to remark on the heat.

Laura told him he looked hot and tired, and invited him to come out to the others, and cool himself on the lawn. She went for her parasol, Guy ran for her camp-stool, and Philip, going to the piano, read what they had been singing. The lines were in Laura's writing, corrected, here and there, in Guy's hand.

"BE STEADFAST.

> 'Two loving hearts may sever,
> Yet love shall fail them never.
> Love brightest beams in sorrow's night,
> Love is of life the light.

"Two loving hearts may sever,
Yet hope shall fail them never.
Hope is a star in sorrow's night,—
Forget-me-not of light.

"Two loving hearts may sever,
Yet faith may fail them never.
Trust on through sorrow's night;
Faith is of love and hope the light.

"Two loving hearts may sever,
For sorrow fails them never.
Who knows not love in sorrow's night,
He knows not love in light."

Philip was by no means pleased. However, it was in any thing but a sentimental manner that Guy, looking over him, said, "For sever, read, be separated, but 'a' wouldn't rhyme."

"I translated it into prose, and Guy made it verse," said Laura; "I hope you approve of our performance."

"It is that thing of Helm von Chezy, *Beharre*, is it not?" said Philip, particularly civil, because he was so much annoyed. "You have rendered the spirit very well; but you have sacrificed a good deal to your double rhymes."

"Yes, those last lines are not troubled with any equality of feet," said Guy; "but the repetition is half the beauty. It put me in mind of those lines of Burns—

"'Had we never loved so kindly,
Had we never loved so blindly,
Never met and never parted,
We had ne'er been broken hearted;'

but there is a trust in these that is more touching than that despair."

"Yes, the despair is ready to wish the love had never been," said Laura. "It does not see the star of trust. Why did you use that word 'trust' only once, Guy?"

"I did not want to lose the three—faith, hope, love,—faith keeping the other two alive."

"My doubt was whether it was right to have that analogy."

"Surely," said Guy, eagerly, "that analogy must be the best part of earthly love?"

Here Charlotte came to see if Guy and Laura meant to sing all the afternoon, and they went out. They found the others in the arbour, and Charlotte's histories of its construction gave Philip little satisfaction. They next proceeded to talk over the ball.

"Ah!" said Philip, "balls are the fashion just now. What do you say, Amy, [he was more inclined to patronize her than any one else] to the gaieties we are going to provide for you?"

"You! Are you going to have your new colours? Oh! you are not going to give us a ball?"

"Well! that is fun!" cried Guy. "What glory Maurice de Courcy must be in!"

"He is gone to Allonby," said Philip, "to announce it; saying, he must persuade his father to put off their going to Brighton. Do you think he will succeed?"

"Hardly," said Laura; "poor Lady Kilcoran was so knocked up by their ball that she is the more in want of sea air. Oh, mamma! Eva must come and stay here."

"That she must," said Mrs. Edmonstone; "that will make it easy. She is the only one who will care about the ball."

Philip was obliged to conceal his vexation, and to answer the many eager questions about the arrangements. He stayed to dinner, and as the others went indoors to dress, he lingered near Charlotte, assuming, with some difficulty, an air of indifference, and said,—"Well, Charlotte, did you tease Guy into showing you those verses?"

"O yes," said Charlotte, with what the French call *un air capable.*

"Well, what were they?"

"That I mustn't tell. They were very pretty; but I've promised."

"Promised what?"

"Never to say any thing about them. He made it a condition with me, and I assure you I am to be trusted."

"Right," said Philip; "I'll ask no more."

"It would be of no use," said Charlotte, shaking her head, as if she wished he would prove her further.

Philip was in hopes of being able to speak to Laura after dinner, but his uncle wanted him to come and look over the plans of an estate adjoining Redclyffe, which there was some idea of purchasing. Such an employment would in general have been congenial, but on this occasion it was only by a strong force that he could chain his attention, for Guy was pacing the terrace with Laura and Amabel, and as they pas

and repassed the window, he now and then caught sounds of repeating poetry.

In this Guy excelled. He did not read aloud well; he was too rapid, and eyes and thoughts were apt to travel still faster than the lips, thus producing confusion; but no one could recite better when a passage had taken strong hold of his imagination, and he gave it the full effect of the modulations of his fine voice, conveying in its inflections the impressions which stirred him profoundly. He was just now enchanted with his first reading of "Thalaba," where he found all manner of deep meanings, to which the sisters listened with wonder and delight. He repeated, in a low, awful, thrilling tone, that made Amy shudder, the lines in the seventh book ending with—

> "Who comes from the bridal chamber?
> It is Azrael, angel of death."

"You have not been so taken up with any book since Sintram," said Laura.

"It is like Sintram," he replied.

"Like it?"

"So it seems to me. A strife with the powers of darkness; the victory, forgiveness, resignation, death."

> "'Thou know'st the secret wishes of my heart,
> Do with me as thou wilt, thy will is best.'"

"I wish you would not speak as if you were Thalaba yourself," said Amy; "you bring the whole Domdaniel round us."

"I am afraid he is going to believe himself Thalaba as well as Sintram," said Laura. "But you know Southey did not see all this himself and did not understand it when it was pointed out."

"Don't tell us that," said Amy.

"Nay, I think there is something striking in it," said Guy; then, with a sudden transition, "but is not this ball famous?"

And their talk was of balls and reviews till nine o'clock, when they were summoned to tea.

On the whole, Philip returned to Broadstone by no means comforted.

Never had he known so much difficulty in attending with patience to his duties as in the course of the next fortnight. They became a greater durance, as he at length looked his

feelings full in the face, and became aware of their true nature.

He perceived that the loss of Laura would darken his whole existence; yet he thought that, were he only secure of her happiness, he could have resigned her in silence. Guy was, however, one of the last men in the world whom he could bear to see in possession of her; and probably she was allowing herself to be entangled, if not in heart, at least in manner. If so, she should not be unwarned. He had been her guide from childhood, and he would not fail her now.

Three days before the review, he succeeded in finding time for a walk to Hollywell, not fully decided on the part he should act, though resolved on making some remonstrance. He was crossing a stile, about a mile and a half from Hollywell, when he saw a lady sitting on the stump of a tree, sketching, and found that fate had been so propitious as to send Laura thither alone. The rest had gone to gather mushrooms on a down, and had left her sketching the view of the spires of Broadstone, in the cleft between the high green hills. She was very glad to see him, and held up her purple and olive washes to be criticised; but he did not pay much attention to them. He was almost confused at the sudden manner in which the opportunity for speaking had presented itself.

"It is a long time since I have seen you," said he, at last.

"An unheard-of time."

"Still longer since we have had any conversation."

"I was just thinking so. Not since that hot haymaking, when Guy came home. Indeed, we have had so much amusement lately that I have hardly had time for thought. Guy says we are all growing dissipated."

"Ah! your German, and dancing, and music, do not agree with thought."

"Poor music?" said Laura, smiling. "But I am ready for a lecture; I have been feeling more like a butterfly than I like."

"I know you think me unjust about music, and I freely confess that I cannot estimate the pleasure it affords, but I doubt whether it is a safe pleasure. It forms common ground for persons who would otherwise have little in common, and leads to intimacies which occasion results never looked for."

"Yes," said Laura, receiving it as a general maxim.

"Laura, you complain of feeling like a butterfly. Is not that a sign you were made for better things?"

"But what can I do? I try to read early and at night, but I can't prevent the fun and gaiety, and indeed I don't think I would. It is innocent, and we never had such a pleasant summer. Charlie is so—so much more equable, and mamma is more easy about him, and I can't help thinking it does them all good, though I do feel idle."

"It is innocent, it is right for a little while," said Philip; "but your dissatisfaction proves that you are superior to such things. Laura, what I fear is, that this summer holiday may entangle you, and so fix your fate as to render your life no holiday. O Laura! take care; know what you are doing!"

"What am I doing?" asked Laura, with an alarmed look of ingenuous surprise.

Never had it been so hard to maintain his composure as now, when her simplicity forced him to come to plainer terms. "I must speak," he continued, "because no one else will. Have you reflected whither this may tend? This music, this versifying, this admitting a stranger so unreservedly into your pursuits?"

She understood now, and hung her head. He would have given worlds to judge of the face hidden by her bonnet, but as she did not reply, he spoke on, his agitation becoming so strong, that the struggle was perceptible in the forced calmness of his tone. "I would not say a word if he were worthy, but Laura—Laura, I have seen Locksley Hall acted once; do not let me see it again in a way which—which would give me infinitely more pain."

The faltering of his voice, so resolutely subdued, touched her extremely, and a thrill of exquisite pleasure glanced through her, on hearing confirmed what she had long felt, that she had taken Margaret's place—nay, as she now learnt, that she was even more precious to him. She only thought of reassuring him.

"No; you need never fear *that*. He ha sno such thought, I am sure." She blushed deeply, but looked in his face. "He treats us both alike; besides, he is so young."

"The mischief is not done," said Philip, trying to resume his usual tone; "I only meant to speak in time. You might let your manner go too far, you might even allow your affec-

tions to be involved without knowing it, if you were not on your guard."

"Never!" said Laura. "Oh, no; I could never dream of *that* with Guy. I like Guy very much; I think better of him than you do; but oh, no; he could never be my first and best; I could never care for him in *that* way. How could *you* think so, Philip?"

"Laura, I cannot but look on you with what may seem over-solicitude. Since I lost Fanny, and worse than lost Margaret, you have been my home; my first, my most precious interest. O, Laura," and he did not even attempt to conceal the trembling and tenderness of his voice, "could I bear to lose you, to see you thrown away or changed—you, dearest, best of all?"

Laura did not turn away her head this time, but raising her beautiful face, glowing with such a look as had never beamed there before, while tears rose to her eyes, she said, "Don't speak of my changing towards you. I never could; for if there is any thing to care for in me, it is you that have taught it to me."

If ever face plainly told another that he was her first and best, Laura's did so now. Away went misgivings, and he looked at her in happiness too great for speech; at least, he could not speak till he had mastered his emotion, but his countenance was sufficient reply. Even then, in the midst of this flood of ecstasy, came the thought, "What have I done?"

He had gone further than he had ever intended. It was a positive avowal of love; and what would ensue? Cessation of intercourse with her, endless vexations, the displeasure of her family, loss of influence, contempt, and from Mr. Edmonstone, for the pretensions of a penniless soldier. His joy was too great to be damped, but it was rendered cautious. "Laura, my own! (what delight the words gave her,) you have made me very happy. We know each other now, and trust each other for ever."

"O yes, yes; nothing can alter what has grown up with us."

"It is for ever!" repeated Philip. "But, Laura, let us be content with our own knowledge of what we are to each other. Do not let us call in others to see our happiness."

Laura looked surprised, for she always considered any communication about his private feelings too sacred to be

peated, and wondered he should think the injunction necessary. "I never can bear to talk about the best kinds of happiness," said she; "but, oh! (and she sprang up,) here they come."

Poor Mrs. Edmonstone, as she walked back from her mushroom-field, she little guessed that words had been spoken which would give the colouring to her daughter's whole life —she little guessed that her much-loved and esteemed nephew had betrayed her confidence!

As she and the girls came up, Philip advanced to meet them, that Laura might have a few moments to recover, while with an effort he kept himself from appearing absent in the conversation that ensued. It was brief, for having answered some questions with regard to the doings on the important day, he said, that since he had met them he would not come on to Hollywell, and bade them farewell, giving Laura a pressure of the hand which renewed the glow on her face.

He walked back, trying to look through the dazzling haze of joy so as to see his situation clearly. It was impossible for him not to perceive that there had been an absolute declaration of affection, and that he had established a private understanding with his cousin. It was not, however, an engagement, nor did he at present desire to make it so. It was impossible for him as yet to marry, and he was content to wait without a promise, since that could not add to his entire reliance on Laura. He could not bear to be rejected by her parents; he knew his poverty would be the sole ground of objection, and he was not asking her to share it. He believed sincerely that a long lingering attachment to himself would be more for her good than a marriage with one who would have been a high prize for worldly aims, and was satisfied that by winning her heart, he had taken the only sure means of securing her from becoming attached to Guy, while secrecy was the only way of preserving his intercourse with her on the same footing, and exerting his influence over the family.

It was calmly reflected, for Philip's love was tranquil, though deep and steady, and he rather sought to preserve Laura as she was, than to make her any thing more; and this very calmness contributed to his self-deception on this first occasion that he had ever actually swerved from the path of right.

With an uncomfortable sensation, he met Guy riding

home from his tutor, entirely unsuspicious. He stopped and talked of the preparations at Broadstone, where he had been over the ground with Maurice de Courcy, and had heard the band.

"What do you think of it?" said Philip, absently.

"They *should* keep better time! Really, Philip, there is one fellow with a bugle that ought to be flogged every day of his life!" said Guy, making a droll, excruciated face.

How a few words can change the whole current of ideas! The band was connected with Philip, therefore he could not bear to hear it found fault with, and adduced some one's opinion that the man in question was one of the best of their musicians.

Guy could not help shrugging his shoulders, as he laughed, and said,—"Then I shall be obliged to take to my heels if I meet the rest. Good-bye."

"How conceited they have made that boy about his fine ear," thought Philip. "I wonder he is not ashamed to parade his music considering whence it is derived."

CHAPTER IX.

Ah! county Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark, his lay who thrilled all day,
Sits hushed, his partner nigh,
Breeze, bird, and flower, confess the hour,
But where is county Guy?

SCOTT.

HOW was it meantime with Laura? The others were laughing and talking round her, but all seemed lost in the transcendent beam that had shone out on her. To be told by Philip that she was all to him that he had always been to her! This one idea pervaded her—too glorious, too happy for utterance, almost for distinct thought. The softening of his voice and the look with which he had regarded her, recurred again and again, startling her with a sudden surprise of joy almost as at the first moment. Of the future Laura thought not. Never had a promise of love been made with less knowledge of what it amounted to; it seemed merely an expression of sentiments that she had never been without; for had she not always looked up to Philip more than any other living creature, and gloried in being his favourite cousin? Ever since the time when he explained to her the plates in the Encyclopædia, and made her read "Joyce's Scientific Dialogues," when Amy took fright at the first page. That this might lead further did not occur to her; she was eighteen; she had no experience, not even in novels; she did not know what she had done; and, above all, she had so learned to surrender her opinions to Philip, and to believe him always right, that she would never have dreamed of

questioning wherever he might choose to lead her. Even the caution of secrecy did not alarm her, though she wondered that he thought it required, safe as his confidence always was with her. Mrs. Edmonstone had been so much occupied with Charles's illness, as to have been unable to attend to her daughters in their girlish days; and in the governess's time the habit had been disused of flying at once with her to every joy or grief. Laura's thoughts were not easy of access, and Philip had long been all in all to her. She was too ignorant of life to perceive that it was her duty to make this conversation known; or, more truly, she did not awaken her mind to consider that any thing could be wrong that Philip desired.

On coming home, she ran up to her own room, and, sitting by the open window, gave herself up to that delicious dream of new-found joy.

There she still sat when Amy came in, opening the door softly, and treading lightly and airily as she entered, bringing two or three roses of different tints.

"Laura! not begun to dress?"

"Is it time?"

"Shall I answer you according to what Philip calls my note of time, and tell you the pimpernels are closed, and the tigridias dropping their leaves? It would be a proper answer for you; you look as if you were in fairy land."

"Is papa come home?"

"Long ago! and Guy too. Why, where could you have been, not to have heard Guy and Eveleen singing the Irish melodies?"

"In a trance," said Laura, starting up, and laughing with a slight degree of constraint, which caused Amy, who was helping her to dress, to exclaim, "Has any thing happened, Laura?"

"What should have happened?"

"I can't guess, unless the fairies in the great ring on Ashendown came to visit you when we were gone. But seriously, dear Laura, are you sure you are not tired? Is nothing the matter?"

"Nothing at all, thank you. I was only thinking over the talk I had with Philip."

"Oh!"

Amy never thought of entering into Philip's talks with Laura, and was perfectly satisfied.

[illegible] was harassed again. [illegible] to [illegible] to which [illegible] intercourse with [illegible] she was convinced, too, it was safe at [illegible] Philip would for it that there might be danger [illegible] freedom of their behaviour.

[illegible] consuming than Guy's demeanour. [illegible] full of the Thursday, and of a plan [illegible] Charles to go to the review. It had [illegible] was going over the ground with [illegible] Charles had thought it possible [illegible] home, and former ex- [illegible] it had never even [illegible] at the idea with [illegible] seemed not to [illegible] had not been [illegible] was [illegible]

She could not bear to have Charles as a friend [illegible] he was; and she had an unpleasant remembrance of the last occasion when they had taken him to a demonstration, when they had lost, first Mr. Edmonstone, next the carriage, and lastly, Amy and Charlotte all had been frightened, and Charles laid up for three days from the fatigue.

Answers, however, met each objection. Charles was much stronger; Guy's arm would be ready for him; Guy would find the carriage. Philip would be there to help handle Maurice; and whenever Charles was tired, Guy would take him home at once, without spoiling any one's pleasure.

"Except your own," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"Thank you; but this would be so delightful."

"Ah!" said Charles, "it would be as great a triumph as the dog's that caught the hare with the clog round his neck the dog's, I mean."

"If you will but trust me with him," said Guy, turning on her all the pleading eloquence of his eyes; "you know he can get in and out of the pony-carriage quite easily."

"As well as walk across the room," said Charles.

"I would drive him in it, and tell William to ride in, and be at hand to hold the pony or take it out; and the tent is so near, that you could get to the breakfast, unless the review had been enough for you. I paced the distance to make sure,

and it is no further than from the garden-door to the cherry-tree."

"That is nothing," said Charles.

"And William shall be in waiting to bring the pony the instant you are ready, and we can go home independently of every one else."

"I thought," interposed Mrs. Edmonstone, "that you were to go to the mess-dinner—what is to become of that?"

"O," said Charles, "that will be simply a bore, and he may rejoice to be excused from going the whole hog."

"To be sure, I had rather dine in peace at home."

Mrs. Edmonstone was not happy, but she had great confidence in Guy; and her only real scruple was, that she did not think it fair to occupy him entirely with attendance on her son. She referred it to papa, which, as every one knew, was the same as yielding the point, and consoled herself by the certainty that to prevent it would be a great disappointment to both the youths. Laura was convinced that to achieve the adventure of Charles at the review, was at present at least a matter of far more prominence with Guy than any thing relating to herself.

All but Laura and her mother were wild about the weather, especially on Wednesday, when there was an attempt at a thunder-storm. Nothing was studied but the sky; and the conversation consisted of prognostications, reports of rises and falls of the glass, of the way weathercocks were turning, or about to turn, of swallows flying high or low, red sunsets, and halos round the moon, until at last Guy, bursting into a merry laugh, begged Mrs. Edmonstone's pardon for being such a nuisance, and made a vow, and kept it, that be the weather what it might, he would say not another word about it that evening; it deserved to be neglected, for he had not been able to settle to any thing all day.

He might have said for many days before; for since the last ball, and still more since Lady Eveleen had been at Hollywell, it had been one round of merriment and amusement. Scrambling walks, tea-drinkings out of doors, dances among themselves, or with the addition of the Harpers, were the order of the day. Amy, Eveleen, and Guy, could hardly come into the room without dancing, and the piano was said to acknowledge nothing but waltzes, polkas, and now and then an Irish jig, for the special benefit of Mr. Edmonstone's

ears. The morning was almost as much spent in mirth as the afternoon, for the dawdlings after breakfast, and before luncheon, had a great tendency to spread out and meet; there was new music and singing to be practised, or preparations made for evening's diversion, or councils to be held, which Laura's absence could not break up, though it often made Amy feel how much less idle and frivolous Laura was than herself. Eveleen said the same, but she was visiting, and it was a time to be idle; and Mr. Lascelles seemed to be of the same opinion with regard to his pupil; for, when Guy was vexed at not having done as much work as usual, he only laughed at him for expecting to be able to go to balls, and spend a summer of gaiety, while he studied as much as at Oxford.

Thursday morning was all that heart could wish, the air cooled by the thunder, and the clouds looking as if raining was foreign to their nature. Mr. and Mrs. Edmonstone, their daughters, and Lady Eveleen, were packed inside and outside the great carriage, while Guy, carefully settling Charles in the low phæton, putting in all that any one recommended, from an air-cushion to an umbrella, flourished his whip, and drove off with an air of exultation and delight.

Everything went of to admiration. No one was more amused than Charles. The scene was so perfectly new and delightful to one accustomed to such a monotonous life, that the very sight of people was a novelty. Nowhere was there so much laughing and talking as in that little carriage, and whenever Mrs. Edmonstone's anxious eyes fell upon it, she always saw Charles sitting upright with a face so full of eager interest as to banish all thought of fatigue. Happy, indeed, he was. He enjoyed the surprise of his acquaintance at meeting him; he enjoyed Dr. Mayerne's laugh and congratulation; he enjoyed seeing how foolish Philip thought him, nodding to his mother and sisters, laughing at the dreadful faces Guy could not help making at any particularly discordant note of the offensive bugle; and his capabilities rising with his spirits, he did all that the others did, walked further than he had done for years, was lifted up steps without knowing how, sat out the whole breakfast, talked to all the world, and well earned the being thoroughly tired, as he certainly was, when Guy put him into the carriage and drove him home,

and still more so when Guy all but carried him up stairs, and laid him on the sofa in the dressing-room.

However, his mother announced that it would have been so unnatural if he had not been fatigued, that she should have been more anxious, and, leaving him to repose, they all, except Mr. Edmonstone, who had stayed to dine at the mess, sat down to dinner.

Amy came down dressed just as the carriage had been announced, and found Laura and Eveleen standing by the table, arranging their bouquets, while Guy, in the dark, behind the piano, was playing—not, as usual in such cases, the Harmonious Blacksmith, but a chant.

"Is mamma ready?" asked Laura.

"Nearly," said Amy; "but I wish she was not obliged to go! I am sure she cannot bear to leave Charlie."

"I hope she is not going on my account," said Eveleen.

"No," said Laura, "we must go; it would so frighten papa if we did not come. Besides, there is nothing to be uneasy about with Charles."

"O, no," said Amy; "she says so, only she is always anxious, and she is afraid he is too restless to go to sleep."

"We must get home as fast as we can; if you don't mind, Eva," said Laura, remembering how her last dance with Guy had delayed them.

"Can I do any good to Charlie?" said Guy, ceasing his music. "I don't mean to go."

"Not go!" cried the girls in consternation.

"He is joking!" said Eveleen. "But, I declare!" added she, advancing towards him, "he is not dressed! Come, nonsense, this is carrying it too far; you'll make us all too late, and then I'll set Maurice at you."

"I am afraid it is no joke," said Guy, smiling.

"You must go. It will never do for you to stay away," said Laura, decidedly.

"Are you tired? Aren't you well?" asked Amy.

"Quite well, thank you, but I am sure I had better not."

Laura thought she had better not seem anxious to take him, so she left the task of persuasion to the others, and Amy went on.

"Neither mamma nor Charlie could bear to think you stayed because of him."

"I don't, I assure you, Amy; I meant it before. I have been gradually finding out that it must come to this.

"Oh, you think it a matter of right and wrong! But you don't think balls wrong?"

"Oh, no; only they won't do for such an absurd person as I am. The last turned my head for a week, and I am much too unsteady for this."

"Well, if you think it a matter of duty, it can't be helped," said Amy, sorrowfully; "but I am very sorry."

"Thank you," said Guy, thinking it compassion, not regret; "but I shall do very well. I shall be all the happier to-morrow for a quiet hour at my Greek, and you'll tell me all the fun."

"You like it so much!" sighed Amy; "but you have made up your mind, and I ought not to tease you."

"That's right, Amy; he does it on purpose to be teased," said Eveleen, "and I never knew any body so provoking. Mind, Sir Guy, if you make us all too late, you sha'n't have the ghost of a quadrille with me."

"I shall console myself by quadrilling with Andromache," said Guy.

"Come, no nonsense—off to dress directly! How can you have the conscience to stand there when the carriage is at the door?"

"I shall have great pleasure in handing you in when you are ready."

"Laura—Amy! Does he really mean it?"

"I am afraid he does," said Amy.

Eveleen let herself fall on the sofa as if fainting. "Oh!" she said; "take him away! Let me never see the face of him again! I am perfectly overcome! All my teaching thrown away!"

"I am sorry for you," said Guy laughing.

"And how do you mean to face Maurice?"

"Tell him his first bugle has so distracted me that I can't answer for the consequences if I come to-night."

Mrs. Edmonstone came in, saying,—

"Come I have kept you waiting shamefully, but I have been consoling myself by thinking you must be wel. enter tained, as I heard no Harmonious Blacksmith. Papa wil. be wondering where we are."

"Oh, mamma! Guy won't go."

"Guy! is any thing the matter?"

"Nothing, thank you, only idleness."

"This will never do. You really must go, Guy."

"Indeed I think not. Pray don't order me, Mrs. Edmonstone."

"What o'clock is it, Amy? Past ten! Papa will be in despair! What is to be done? How long do you take to dress, Guy?"

"Not under an hour," said Guy, smiling.

"Nonsense! But if there was time I should certainly send you. Self-discipline may be carried too far, Guy. But now it can't be helped—I don't know how to keep papa waiting any longer. Laura, what shall I do?"

"Let me go to Charles," answered Guy. "Perhaps I can read him to sleep."

"Thank you; but don't talk, or he will be too excited. Reading would be the very thing! It will be a pretty story to tell every one who asks for you that I have left you to nurse my son!"

"No, for no such good reason," said Guy; "only because I am a great fool."

"Well, Sir Guy, I am glad you can say one sensible word," said Lady Eveleen.

"Too true, I assure you," he answered, as he handed her in. "Good-night! You will keep the quadrille for me till I am rational."

He handed the others in, and shut the door. Mrs. Edmonstone, ruffled out of her composure, exclaimed,—

"Well, this is provoking!"

"Every one will be vexed," said Laura.

"It will be so stupid!" said Amy.

"I give him up," said Eveleen. "I once had hopes of him!"

"If it was not for papa, I really would turn back this moment and fetch him," cried Mrs. Edmonstone, starting forward. "I'm sure it will give offence. I wish I had not consented."

"He can't be made to see that his presence is of importance to any living creature," said Laura.

"What is the reason of this whim?" said Eveleen.

"No, Eveleen, it is not whim," said Laura; "it is because he thinks dissipation makes him idle."

"Then if he is idle, I wonder what the rest of the world is!" said Eveleen. "I am sure we all ought to stay at home too."

"I think so," said Amy. "I know I shall feel all night as if I was wrong to be there."

"I am angry," said Mrs. Edmonstone; "and yet I believe it is a great sacrifice."

"Yes, mamma; after all our looking forward to it," said Amy. "Oh! yes," and her voice lost its piteous tone, "it is a real sacrifice."

"If he was not a mere boy, I should say a lover's quarrel was at the bottom of it," said Eveleen. "Depend upon it, Laura, it is all your fault. You only danced once with him at our ball, and all this week you have played for us, as if it was on purpose to cut him."

Laura was glad of the darkness, and her mother, who had a particular dislike to jokes of this sort, went on,—"If it were only ourselves I should not care, but there are so many who will fancy it caprice, or worse."

"The only comfort is," said Amy, "that it is Charlie's gain."

"I hope they will not talk," said Mrs. Edmonstone. "But Charlie will never hold his tongue. He will grow excited, and not sleep all night."

Poor Mrs. Edmonstone! her trials did not end here, for when she replied to her husband's inquiry for Guy, Mr. Edmonstone said offence had already been taken at his absence from the dinner; he would not have had this happen for fifty pounds, she ought not to have suffered it; but it was all her nonsense about Charles, and as to not being late, she should have waited till midnight rather than not have brought him. In short, he said as much more than he meant, as a man in a pet is apt to say, and nevertheless Mrs. Edmonstone had to look as amiable and smiling as if nothing was the matter.

The least untruthful answer she could frame to the inquiries for Sir Guy Morville was, that young men were apt to be lazy about balls, and this sufficed for good-natured Mrs. Deane, but Maurice poured out many exclamations about his ill-behaviour, and Philip contented himself with the mere fact of his not being there, and made no remark.

Laura turned her eyes anxiously on Philip. They had not met since the important conversation on Ashen-down, and she

found herself looking with more pride than ever at his tall, noble figure, as if he was more her own; but the calmness of feeling was gone. She could not meet his eye, nor see him turn towards her without a start and tremor for which she could not render herself a reason, and her heart beat so much that it was at once a relief and a disappointment that she was obliged to accept her other cousin as her first partner. Philip had already asked Lady Eveleen, for neither wished to appear too eager in claiming Laura, nor to let his friends think he had any dislike to the Irish girl.

Eveleen was much pleased to have him for a partner, and told herself she would be on her good behaviour. It was a polka, and there was not much talk, which, perhaps, was all the better for her. She admired the review, and the luncheon, and spoke to Charles without any sauciness, and Philip was condescending and agreeable.

"I must indulge myself in abusing that stupid cousin of yours!" said she. "Did you ever know a man of such wonderful crotchets?"

"This is a very unexpected one," said Philip.

"It came like a thunderclap. I thought till the last moment he was joking, for he likes dancing so much; he was the life of our ball, and how could any one suppose he would fly off at the last moment?"

"He seems rather to enjoy doing things suddenly."

"I tell Laura she has affronted him," said Eveleen, laughing. "She has been always busy of late when we have wanted her; and I assure her his pride has been piqued. Don't you think that is an explanation, Captain Morville?"

It was Captain Morville's belief, but he would not say so.

"Isn't Laura looking lovely?" Eveleen went on. "I am sure she is the beauty of the night!" She was pleased to see Captain Morville's attention gained. "She is even better dressed than at our ball—those Venetian pins suit the form of her head so well. Her beauty is better than almost any one's, because she has so much countenance."

"True," said Philip.

"How proud Maurice looks of having her on his arm. Does not he? Poor Maurice! he is desperately in love with her!"

"As is shown by his pining melancholy."

Eveleen laughed with her clear hearty laugh. "I see y

know what we mean by desperately in love! No," she added, more gravely, "I am very glad it is only *that* kind of desperation. One could not think of Maurice and Laura together. He does not know the best part of Laura."

Eveleen was highly flattered by Captain Morville conducting her a second time round the room, instead of at once restoring her to her aunt.

He secured Laura next, and leading her away from her own party, said, "Laura, have you been overdoing it?"

"It is not that," said Laura, wishing she could keep from blushing.

"It is the only motive that could excuse his extraordinary behaviour."

"Surely you know he says that he is growing unsettled. It is part of his rule of self-discipline."

"Absurd!—exaggerated!—incredible! This is the same story as there was about the horse. It is either caprice or temper, and I am convinced that some change in your manner—nay, I say unconscious, and am far from blaming you—is the cause. Why else did he devote himself to Charles, and leave you all on my uncle's hands in the crowd?"

"We could shift for ourselves much better than Charlie."

"This confirms my belief that my warning was not mistimed. I wish it could have been done without decidedly mortifying him and rousing his temper, because I am sorry others should be slighted; but if he takes your drawing back so much to heart, it shows that it was time you should do so."

"If I thought I had!"

"It was visible to others—to another, I should say."

"O, that is only Eveleen's nonsense! The only difference, I am conscious of having made, was keeping more up stairs, and not trying to persuade him to come here to-night."

"I have no doubt it was this that turned the scale. He only waited for persuasion, and you acted very wisely in not flattering his self-love."

"Did I?—I did not know it."

"A woman's instinct is often better than reasoning, Laura; to do the right thing without knowing why. But come, I suppose we must play our part in the pageant of the night."

For that evening, Laura, contrary to the evidence of her senses, was persuaded by her own lover that Guy was falling

in love with her; and after musing all through the dance she said, "What do you think of the scheme that has been started for my going to Ireland with papa?"

"Your going to Ireland?"

"Yes; you know none of us, except papa, have seen grandmamma since Charles began to be ill, and there is some talk of his taking me with him when he goes this summer."

"I knew he was going, but I thought it was not to be till later in the year—not till after the long vacation."

"So he intended, but he finds he must be at home before the end of October, and it would suit him best to go in August."

"Then what becomes of Guy?"

"He stays at Hollywell. It will be much better for Charles to have him there while papa is away. I thought when the plan was first mentioned I should be sorry, except that it is quite right to go to grandmamma; but if it is so, about Guy, this absence would be a good thing—it would make a break, and I could begin again on different terms."

"Wisely judged, Laura. Yes, on that account it would be very desirable, though it will be a great loss to me, and I can hardly hope to be so near you on your return."

"Ah! yes, so I feared!" sighed Laura.

"But we must give up something; and for Guy's own sake, poor fellow, it will be better to make a break, as you say. It will save him pain by and by."

"I dare say papa will consult you about when his journey is to be. His only doubt was whether it would do to leave Guy so long alone; and if you say it would be safe, it would decide him at once."

"I see little chance of mischief. Guy has few temptations here, and a strong sense of honour; besides, I shall be at hand. Taking all things into consideration, Laura, I think that, whatever the sacrifice to ourselves, it is expedient to recommend his going at once, and your accompanying him."

All the remainder of the evening, Philip was occupied with attentions to the rest of the world, but Laura's eyes followed him every where, and though she neither expected nor desired him to bestow more time on her, she underwent a strange restlessness and impatience of feeling. Her numerous partners teased her by hindering her from watching him moving about the room, catching his tones, and guessing what

he was talking of; not that she wanted to meet his eye, for she did not like to blush, nor did she think it pleased him to see her do so, for he either looked away immediately or conveyed a glance which she understood as monitory. She kept better note of his countenance than of her own partner's.

"Mr. Thorndale, meanwhile, kept aloof from Lady Eveleen de Courcy, but Captain Morville perceived that his eyes were often turned towards her, and well knew it was principle, and not inclination, that held him at a distance. He did indeed once ask her to dance, but she was engaged, and he did not ask her to reserve a future dance for him, but contented himself with little Amy.

Amy was doing her best to enjoy herself, because she thought it ungrateful not to receive pleasure from those who wished to give it, but to her it wanted the zest and animation of Lady Kilcoran's ball. Besides, she knew she had been as idle as Guy, or still more so, and she thought it wrong she should have pleasure while he was doing penance. It was on her mind, and damped her spirits, and though she smiled, and talked, and admired, and danced lightly and gaily, there was a sensation of weariness throughout, and no one but Eveleen was sorry when Mrs. Edmonstone sent Maurice to see for the carriage.

Philip was one of the gentlemen who came to shawl them. As he put Laura's cloak round her shoulders he was able to whisper, "Take care; you must be cautious—self-command."

Laura, though blushing and shrinking the moment before, was braced by his words and tone to attempt all he wished. She looked up in what she meant to be an indifferent manner, and made some observation in a careless tone—any thing rather than let Philip think her silly. After what he had said, was she not bound more than ever to exert herself to the utmost, that he might not be disappointed in her? She loved him only the better for what others might have deemed a stern coldness of manner, for it made the contrast of his real warmth of affection more precious. She mused over it, as much as her companions' conversation would allow, on the road home. They arrived, Mrs. Edmonstone peeped into Charles's room, announced that he was quietly asleep, and they all bade each other good-night, or good-morning, and parted.

CHAPTER X.

Leonora. Yet often with respect he speaks of thee.
Tasso. Thou meanest with forbearance, prudent, subtle,
'Tis that annoys me, for he knows to use
Language so smooth and so conditional,
That seeming praise, from him, is actual blame.

GOETHE'S *Tasso*

WHEN the Hollywell party met at breakfast, Charles showed himself by no means the worse for his yesterday's experiment. He said he had gone to sleep in reasonable time, lulled by some poetry, he knew not what, of which Guy's voice had made very pretty music, and he was now full of talk about the amusement he had enjoyed yesterday, which seemed likely to afford food for conversation for many a week to come.

After all the care Guy had taken of him, Mrs. Edmonstone could not find it in her heart to scold, and her husband having spent his vexation upon her, had none left to bestow on the real culprit. So when Guy, with his bright morning face, and his hair hanging shining and wet round it, opened the dining-room door, on his return from bathing in the river, Mr. Edmonstone's salutation only conveyed that humorous anger that no one cares for.

"Good-morning to you, Sir Guy Morville! I wonder what you have to say for yourself."

"Nothing," said Guy, smiling; then, as he took his place by Mrs. Edmonstone, "I hope you are not tired after your hard day's work?"

"Not at all, thank you."

"Amy, can you tell me the name of this flower?"

"Oh! have you really found the arrow-head? How

beautiful! Where did you get it? I didn't know it grew in our river."

"There is plenty of it in that reedy place beyond the turn. I thought it looked like something out of the common way."

"Yes! What a purple eye it has! I must draw it. Thank you!"

"And, Charlotte, Bustle has found for you a moorhen's nest."

"How delightful! Is it where I can go and see the dear little things?"

"It is rather a swamp; but I have been putting down stepping-stones for you, and I dare say I can jump you across. It was that which made me so late, for which I ought to have asked pardon," said he to Mrs. Edmonstone, with his look of courtesy.

Never did man look less like an offended lover, or like a morose self-tormentor.

"There are others later," said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking at Lady Eveleen's empty chair.

"So you think that is all you have to ask pardon for," said Mr. Edmonstone. "I advise you to study your apologies, for you are in pretty tolerable disgrace."

"Indeed, I am very sorry," said Guy, with such a change of countenance that Mr. Edmonstone's good nature could not bear to see it.

"Oh, 'tis no concern of mine! It would be going rather the wrong way, indeed, for you to be begging my pardon for all the care you've been taking of Charlie; but you had better consider what you have to say for yourself before you show your face at Broadstone."

"No?" said Guy, puzzled for a moment, but quickly looking relieved, and laughing, "What! Broadstone in despair for want of me?"

"And we perfectly exhausted with answering questions as to what was become of Sir Guy."

"Dreadful," said Guy, now laughing heartily, in the persuasion that it was all a joke. "O, Lady Eveleen, good-morning; you are come in good time to give me the story of the ball, for no one else tells me one word about it."

"Because you don't deserve it," said she. "I hope you have repented by this time."

"If you want to make me repent, you should give me a very alluring description."

"I sha'n't say one word about it; I shall send you to Coventry, as Maurice and all the regiment mean to do," said Eveleen, turning away from him with a very droll arch manner of offended dignity.

"Hear, hear! Eveleen send any one to Coventry!" cried Charles.

"See what the regiment say to you."

"Ay, when I am sent to Coventry?"

"O! Paddy, Paddy!" cried Charles, and there was a general laugh.

"Laura seems to be doing it in good earnest without announcing it," added Charles, when the laugh was over, "which is the worst sign of all."

"Nonsense, Charles," said Laura, hastily; then afraid she had owned to annoyance, she blushed, and was angry with herself for blushing.

"Well, Laura, *do* tell me who your partners were."

Very provoking, thought Laura, that I cannot say what is so perfectly natural and ordinary without my foolish cheeks tingling. He may think it is because he is speaking to me. So she hurried on; "Maurice first, then Philip," and then showed, what Amy and Eveleen thought, strange oblivion of the rest of the partners.

They proceeded into the history of the ball; and Guy thought no more of his offences till the following day, when he went to Broadstone. Coming back, he found the drawing-room full of visitors, and was obliged to sit down and join in the conversation; but Mrs. Edmonstone saw he was inwardly chafing, as he betrayed by his inability to remain still, the twitchings of his forehead and lip, and a tripping and stumbling of the words on his tongue. She was sure he wanted to talk to her, and longed to get rid of Mrs. Brownlow; but the door was no sooner shut on the visitors than Mr. Edmonstone came in, with a long letter for her to read and comment upon. Guy took himself out of the way of the consultation, and began to hurry up and down the terrace, until, seeing Amabel crossing the field towards the little gate into the garden, he went to open it for her.

She looked up at him, and exclaimed—"Is any thing the matter?"

"Nothing to signify," he said; "I was only waiting for your mother. I have got into a mess, that is all."

"I am sorry," began Amy, there resting in the doubt whether she might inquire further, and intending not to burthen him with her company any longer than till she reached the house door; but Guy went on,—

"No, you have no occasion to be sorry; it is all my own fault; at least, if I was clear how it is my fault, I should not mind it so much. It is that ball. I am sure I had not the least notion any one would care whether I was there or not."

"I am sure we missed you very much."

"You are all so kind; beside, I belong in a manner to you; but what could it signify to any one else? And here I find that I have vexed every one."

"Ah!" said Amy, "mamma said she was afraid it would give offence."

"I ought to have attended to her. It was a fit of self-will in managing myself," said Guy, murmuring low, as if trying to find the real indictment; "yet I thought it a positive duty; —wrong every way."

"What has happened?" said Amy, turning back with him, though she had reached the door.

"Why, the first person I met was Mr. Gordon; and he spoke, like your father, half in joke, and I thought entirely so; he said something about all the world being in such a rage, that I was a bold man to venture into Broadstone. Then, while I was at Mr. Lascelles', in came Dr. Mayerne. "We missed you at the dinner," he said; "and I hear you shirked the ball too." I told him how it was, and he said he was glad that was all, and advised me to go and call on Colonel Deane and explain. I thought that the best way—indeed, I meant it before, and was walking to his lodgings when Maurice de Courcy met me. "Ha!" he cries out, "Morville! I thought at least you would have been laid up for a month with the typhus fever! As a friend, I advise you to go home and catch something, for it is the only excuse that will serve you. I am not quite sure that it will not be high treason for me to be seen speaking to you." I tried to get at the rights of it, but he is such a harum-scarum fellow there was no succeeding. Next I met Thorndale, who only bowed and passed on the other side of the street—sign enough how it was with

Philip; so I thought it best to go at once to the Captain, and get a rational account of what was the matter."

"Did you?" said Amy, who, though concerned and rather alarmed, had been smiling at the humorous and expressive tones with which he could not help giving effect to his narration.

"Yes. Philip was at home, and very—very——"

"Gracious?" suggested Amy, as he hesitated for a word.

"Just so. Only the vexatious thing was, that we never could succeed in coming to an understanding. He was ready to forgive; but I could not disabuse him of an idea—where he picked it up I cannot guess—that I had stayed away out of a pique. He would not even tell me what he thought had affronted me, though I asked him over and over again to be only straightforward; he declared I knew."

"How excessively provoking!" cried Amy. "You cannot guess what he meant?"

"Not the least in the world. I have not the most distant suspicion. It was of no use to declare I was not offended with any one; he only looked in that way of his, as if he knew much better than I did myself, and told me he could make allowances."

"Worse than all! How horrid of him!"

"No, don't spoil me. No doubt he thinks he has grounds, and my irritation was unjustifiable. Yes, I got into my old way. He cautioned me, and nearly made me mad! I never was nearer coming to a regular outbreak. Always the same! Fool that I am."

"Now, Guy, that is always your way; when other people are provoking, you abuse yourself. I am sure Philip was so, with his calm assertion of being right."

"The more provoking, the more trial for me."

"But you endured it. You say it was only *nearly* an outbreak. You parted friends? I am sure of that?"

"Yes, it would have been rather too bad not to do that."

"Then why do you scold yourself, when you really had the victory?"

"The victory will be if the inward feeling as well as the outward token is ever subdued."

"O, that must be in time, of course. Only let me hear how you got on with Colonel Deane."

"He was very good-natured, and would have laughed it off, but Philip went with me, and looked grand, and begged in a solemn way that no more might be said. I could have got on better alone; but Philip was very kind, or, as you say, gracious."

"And provoking," added Amy, "only I believe you do not like me to say so."

"It is more agreeable to hear you call him so at this moment than is good for me. I have no right to complain, since I gave the offence."

"The offence?"

"The absenting myself."

"Oh! that you did because you thought it right."

"I want to be clear that it was right."

"What do you mean?" cried she, astonished. "It was a great piece of self-denial, and I only felt it wrong not to be doing the same."

"Nay, how should such creatures as you need the same discipline as I?"

She exclaimed to herself how far from his equal she was—how weak, idle, and self-pleasing she felt herself to be; but she could not say so—the words would not come—and she only drooped her little head, humbled by his treating her as better than himself. He proceeded:—

"Something wrong I have done, and I want the clue. Was it self-will in choosing discipline contrary to your mother's judgment? Yet she could not know all. I thought it her kindness in not liking me to lose the pleasure. Besides, one must act for oneself, and this was only my own personal amusement."

"Yes," said Amy, timidly hesitating.

"Well?" said he, with a gentle, deferential tone, that contrasted with his hasty, vehement self-accusations. "Well?" and he waited, though not so as to hurry or frighten her, but to encourage by showing her words had weight.

"I was thinking of one thing," said Amy; "is it not sometimes right to consider whether we ought to disappoint people who want us to be pleased?"

"There it is, I believe," said Guy, stopping and considering; then going on with a better satisfied air, "that is a real rule. Not to be so bent on myself as to sacrifice other

people's feelings to what seems best for me. But I don't see whose pleasure I interfered with."

Amy could have answered "Mine;" but the maidenly feeling checked her again, and she said, "We all thought you would like it."

"And I had no right to sacrifice your pleasure! I see, I see. The pleasure of giving pleasure to others is so much the best there is on earth, that one ought to be passive rather than interfere with it."

"Yes," said Amy, "just as I have seen Mary Ross let herself be swung till she was giddy, rather than disappoint Charlotte and Helen, who thought she liked it."

"If one could get to look at every thing with as much indifference as the swinging! But it is all selfishness. It is as easy to be selfish for one's own good as for one's own pleasure; and, I dare say, the first is as bad as the other."

"I was thinking of some thing else," said Amy. "I should think it more like the holly tree in Southey. Don't you know it? The young leaves are sharp and prickly, because they have so much to defend themselves from, but as the tree grows older, it leaves off the spears, after it has won the victory."

"Very kind of you, and very pretty, Amy," said he, smiling; "but in the mean time, it is surely wrong to be more prickly than is unavoidable, and there is the perplexity. Selfish! selfish! selfish! Oneself is the first object. That is the root."

"Guy, if it is not impertinent to ask, I do wish you would tell me one thing. Why did you think it wrong to go to that ball?" said Amy timidly.

"I don't know that I thought it wrong to go to that individual ball," said Guy; "but my notion was that altogether I was getting into a rattling idle way, never doing my proper quantity of work, or doing it properly, and talking a lot of nonsense sometimes. I thought, last Sunday, it was time to make a short turn somewhere and bring myself up. I could not, or did not, get out of the pleasant talks as Laura does, so I thought giving up this ball would punish me at once, and set me on a new tack of behaving like a reasonable creature."

"Don't call yourself too many names, or you won't be civil to us. We all, except Laura, have been quite as bad."

"Yes; but you had not so much to do."

"We ought," said Amy; "but I meant to be reasonable when Eveleen is gone."

"Perhaps I ought to have waited till then, but I don't know. Lady Eveleen is so amusing that it leads to farther dawdling, and it would not do to wait to resist the temptation till it is out of the way."

As he spoke, they saw Mrs. Edmonstone coming out, and went to meet her. Guy told her his trouble, detailing it more calmly than before he had found out his mistake. She agreed with him that this had been in forgetting that his attending the ball did not concern only himself, but he then returned to say that he could not see what difference it made except to their own immediate circle.

"If it was not you, Guy, who made that speech, I should call it fishing for a compliment. You forget that rank and station make people sought after."

"I suppose there is something in that," said Guy thoughtfully; "at any rate, it is no bad thing to think so, it is so humiliating."

"That is not the way most people would take it."

"No? Does not it prevent one from taking any attention as paid to one's real self? The real flattering thing would be to be made as much of, as Philip is, for one's own merits, and not for the handle to one's name."

"Yes, I think so," said Amy.

"Well, then," as if he wished to gather the whole conversation into one resolve, "the point is to consider whether abstaining from innocent things that may be dangerous to oneself mortifies other people. If so, the vexing them is a certain wrong, whereas, the mischief of talking the pleasure is only a possible contingency. But then, one must take it out of oneself some other way, or it becomes an excuse for self-indulgence."

"Hardly with you," said Mrs. Edmonstone, smiling.

"Because I had rather go at it at once, and forget all about other people. You must teach me consideration, Mrs. Edmonstone, and, in the mean time, will you tell me what you think I had better do about this scrape?"

"Let it alone," said Mrs. Edmonstone. "You have begged every one's pardon, and it had better be forgotten as fast as possible. They have made more fuss already than it is worth. Don't torment yourself about it any more; for,

if you have made a mistake, it is on the right side; and, on the first opportunity, I will go and call on Mrs. Deane, and see if she is very implacable."

The dressing-bell rang, and Amy ran up-stairs, stopping at Laura's door, to ask how she prospered in the drive she had been taking with Charles and Eveleen.

Amy told her of Guy's trouble, and oh! awkward question, inquired if she could guess what it could be that Philip imagined that Guy had been offended at.

"Can't he guess?" said poor Laura, to gain time, and brushing her hair over her face.

"No, he has no idea, though Philip protested that he knew and would not tell him. Philip must have been most tiresome."

"What? Has Guy been complaining?"

"No, only angry with himself for being vexed. I can't think how Philip can go on so!"

"Hush! hush, Amy, you know nothing about it. He has reasons ——"

"I know," said Amy, indignantly: "but what right has he to go on mistrusting? If people are to be judged by their deeds, no one is so good as Guy, and it is too bad to reckon up against him all his ancestors have done. It is wolf and lamb, indeed."

"He does not!" cried Laura. "He never is unjust! How can you say so, Amy?"

"Then why does he impute motives, and not straightforwardly tell what he means?"

"It is impossible in this case," said Laura.

"Do you know what it is?"

"Yes," said Laura, perfectly truthful, and feeling herself in a dreadful predicament.

"And you can't tell me?"

"I don't think I can."

"Nor Guy?"

"Not for worlds," cried Laura, in horror.

"Can't you get Philip to tell him?"

"Oh no, no! I can't explain it, Amy: and all that can be done is to let it die away as fast as possible. It is only the rout about it that is of consequence."

"It is very odd," said Amy, "but I must dress," and away

she ran, much puzzled, but with no desire to look into Philip's secrets.

Laura rested her head on her hand, sighed, and wondered why it was so hard to answer. She almost wished she had said Philip had been advising her to discourage any attachment on Guy's part; but then Amy might have laughed, and asked why. No! no! Philip's confidence was in her keeping, and, cost her what it might, she would be faithful to the trust.

There was now a change. The evenings were merry, but the mornings were occupied. Guy went off to his room, as he used to do last winter; Laura commenced some complicated perspective, or read a German book with a great deal of dictionary; Amy had a book of history, and practised her music diligently; even Charles read more to himself, and resumed the study with Guy and Amy; Lady Eveleen joined in every one's pursuits, enjoyed them, and lamented to Laura that it was impossible to be rational at her own home.

Laura tried to persuade her that there was no need that she should be on the level of the society round her, and it ended in her spending an hour in diligent study every morning, promising to continue it when she went home, while Laura made such sensible comments that Eveleen admired her more than ever; and she, knowing that some were second-hand from Philip, others arising from his suggestions, gave him all the homage paid to herself, as a tribute to him who reigned over her whole being.

Yet she was far from happy. Her reserve towards Guy made her feel stiff and guarded; she had a craving for Philip's presence, with a dread of showing it which made her uncomfortable. She wondered he had not been at Hollywell since the ball, for he must know that she was going to Ireland in a fortnight, and was not likely to return till his regiment had left Broadstone.

An interval passed along enough for her not to be alone in her surprise at his absenting himself before he at length made his appearance, just before luncheon, so as to miss the unconstrained morning hours he used so much to enjoy. He found Guy, Charles, and Amy, deep in Butler's Analogy.

"Are you making poor little Amy read that?" said he.

"Bravo!" cried Charles; "he is so disappointed that it is not Pickwick that he does not know what else to say."

"I don't suppose I take much in," said Amy; "but I like to be told what it means."

"Don't imagine I can do that," said Guy.

"I never spent much time over it," said Philip; "but I should think you were out of your depth."

"Very well," said Charles, "we will return to Dickens to oblige you."

"It is your pleasure to wrest my words," replied Philip, in his own calm manner, though he actually felt hurt, which he had never done before. His complacency was less secure, so that there was more need for self-assertion.

"Where are the rest?" he asked.

"Laura and Eveleen are making a dictation lesson agreeable to Charlotte," said Amy; "I found Eva making mistakes on purpose."

"How much longer does she stay?"

"Till Tuesday. Lord Kilcoran is coming to fetch her."

Charlotte entered, and immediately ran up-stairs to announce her cousin's arrival. Laura was glad of this previous notice, and hoped her blush and tremor were not observed. It was a struggle, through luncheon time, to keep her colour and confusion within bounds, but she succeeded better than she fancied she did, and Philip gave her as much help as he could, by not looking at her. Seeing that he dreaded nothing so much as her exciting suspicion, she was at once braced and alarmed.

Her father was very glad to see him, and reproached him for making himself a stranger, while her sisters counted up the days of his absence.

"There was the time, to be sure, when we met you on Ashen-down, but that was a regular cheat. Laura had you all to herself."

Laura bent down to feed Bustle, and Philip felt *his* colour deepening.

Mr. Edmonstone went on to ask him to come and stay at Hollywell for a week, vowing he would take no refusal. "A week was out of the question," said Philip, "but he could come for two nights." Amabel hinted that there was to be a dinner party on Thursday, thinking it fair to give him warning of what he disliked, but he immediately chose that very day. Again he disconcerted all expectations, when it was time to go out. Mrs. Edmonstone and Charles were going

to drive, the young ladies and Guy to walk, but Philip disposed himself to accompany his uncle in a survey of the wheat.

Laura perceived that he would not risk taking another walk with her when they might be observed. It showed implicit trust to leave her to his rival, but she was sorry to find that caution must put an end to the freedom of their intercourse, and would have stayed at home, but that Eveleen was so wild and unguarded that Mrs. Edmonstone did not like her to be without Laura as a check on her, especially when Guy was of the party.

There was some comfort in that warm pressure of her hand when she bade Philip good-bye, and on that she lived for a long time. He stood at the window watching them till they were out of sight, then moved towards his aunt, who, with her bonnet on, was writing an invitation for Thursday, to Mr. Thorndale.

"I was thinking," said he, in a low voice, "if it would not be as well, if you liked, to ask Thorndale here for those two days?"

"If *you* think so," returned Mrs. Edmonstone, looking at him more inquiringly than he could well bear.

"You know how he enjoys being here, and I owe them all so much kindness."

"Certainly; I will speak to your uncle," said she, going in search of him. She presently returned, saying they should be very glad to see Mr. Thorndale, asking him at the same time, in her tones of interest, after an old servant for whom he had been spending much thought and pains. The kindness cut him to the heart, for it evidently arose from a perception that he was ill at ease, and his conscience smote him. He answered shortly, and was glad when the carriage came: he lifted Charles into it, and stood with folded arms as they drove away.

"The air is stormy," said Charles, looking back at him.

"You thought so too?" said Mrs. Edmonstone, eagerly.

"You did!"

"I have wondered for some time past."

"It was very decided to-day—that long absence—and there was no provoking him to be sententious. His bringing his young man might be only to keep him in due subjection;

but his choosing the day of the party, and above all, not walking with the young ladies."

"It is not like himself," said Mrs. Edmonstone, in a leading tone.

"Either the sweet youth is in love or in the course of some strange transformation."

"In love!" she exclaimed. "Have you any reason for thinking so?"

"Only as a solution of phenomena; but you look as if I had hit on the truth."

"I hope it is no such thing; yet—"

"Yet?" repeated Charles, seriously.

"I think he has discovered the danger."

"The danger of falling in love with Laura? Well, it would be odd if he was not satisfied with his own work. But he must know how preposterous that would be."

"And you think that would prevent it?" said his mother, smiling.

"He is just the man to plume himself on making his judgment conquer his inclination, setting novels at defiance. How magnanimously he would resolve to stifle a hopeless attachment!"

"That is exactly what I think he is doing. I think he has found out the state of his feelings, and is doing all in his power to check them by avoiding her, especially in *tête-à-têtes*, and an unconstrained family party. I am nearly convinced that is his reason for bringing Mr. Thorndale and fixing on the day of the dinner. Poor fellow, it must cost him a great deal, and I long to tell him how I thank him."

"How! I don't think it unlikely," said Charles. "It agrees with what happened the evening of the Kilcoran ball, when he was ready to eat me up for saying something he fancied was a hint of a liking of Guy's for Laura. It was a wild mistake, from something I said about Petrarch, forgetting that Petrarch suggested Laura; but it put him out to a degree, and he made all manner of denunciations on the horror of Guy's falling in love with her. Now, as far as I see, Guy is much more in love with you, or with Deloraine, and the idea argues far more that the Captain himself is touched."

"Depend upon it, Charlie, it was this that led to his de-

tecting the true state of the case. Ever since that he has kept away. It is noble!"

"And what do you think about Laura?"

"Poor child! I doubt if it was well to allow so much intimacy; yet I don't see how it could have been helped.

"So you think she is in for it? I hope not; but she has not been herself of late."

"I think she misses what she has been used to from him, and thinks him estranged, but I trust it goes no further. I see she is out of spirits; I wish I could help her, dear girl, but the worst of all would be to let her guess the real name and meaning of all this, so I can't venture to say a word.

"She is very innocent of novels," said Charles, "and that is well. It would be an unlucky business to have our poor beauty either sitting 'like Patience on a monument,' or 'cock-it up on a baggage wagon.' But that will never be. Philip is not the man to have a wife in barracks. He would have her like his books, in morocco, or not at all."

"He would never involve her in discomforts. He may be entirely trusted, and as long as he goes on as he has begun, there is no harm done; Laura will cheer up, will only consider him as her cousin and friend, and never know he has felt more for her."

"Her going to Ireland is very fortunate."

"It has made me still more glad that the plan should take place at once."

"And you say 'nothing to nobody?'"

"Of course not. We must not let him guess we have observed any thing; there is no need to make your father uncomfortable, and such things need not dawn on Amy's imagination."

It may be wondered at that Mrs. Edmonstone should confide such a subject to her son, but she knew that in a case really affecting his sister, and thus introduced, his silence was secure. In fact, confidence was the only way to prevent the shrewd, unscrupulous raillery which would have caused great distress, and perhaps led to the very disclosure to be deprecated. Of late, too, there had been such a decrease of petulance in Charles, as justified her in trusting him; and lastly, it must be observed that she was one of those open-hearted people who cannot make a discovery nor endure an anxiety without imparting it. Her tact, indeed, led her to make a prudent

choice of confidants, and, in this case her son was by far the best, though she had spoken without premeditation. Her nature would never have allowed her to act as her daughter was doing; she would have been without the strength to conceal her feelings, especially when deprived of the safety-valve of free intercourse with their object.

The visit took place as arranged, and very uncomfortable it was to all who looked deeper than the surface. In the first place, Philip found there the last person he wished his friend to meet—Lady Eveleen, who had been persuaded to stay for the dinner party; but Mr. Thorndale was, as Charles would have said, on his good behaviour, and, ashamed of the fascination her manners exercised over him, was resolved to resist it, answered her gay remarks with brief sentences and stiff smiles, and consorted chiefly with the gentlemen.

Laura was grave and silent, trying to appear unconscious, and only succeeding in being visibly constrained. Philip was anxious and stern in his attempts to appear unconcerned, and even Guy was not quite as bright and free as usual, being puzzled as to how far he was forgiven about the ball.

Amabel could not think what had come to every one, and tried in vain to make them sociable. In the evening they had recourse to a game, said to be for Charlotte's amusement, but in reality to obviate some of the stiffness and constraint; yet even this led to awkward situations. Each person was to set down his or her favourite in history and fiction, flower, virtue, and time at which to have lived, and these were all to be appropriated to the writers. The first read was—

"'Lily of the valley—truth—Joan of Arc—Padre Cristoforo—the present time.'"

"Amy!" exclaimed Guy.

"I see you are right," said Charles; "but tell me your grounds."

"Padre Cristoforo," was the answer

"Fancy little Amy choosing Joan of Arc," said Eveleen, "she who is afraid of a tolerable sized grass-hopper."

"I should like to have been Joan's sister, and heard her tell about her visions," said Amy.

"You would have taught her to believe them," said Philip.

"Taught her!" cried Guy. "Surely you take the high view of her."

"I think," said Philip, "that she is a much injured person, as much by her friends as her enemies; but I don't pretend to enter either enthusiastically or philosophically into her character."

What was it that made Guy's brow contract, as he began to strip the feather of a pen, till, recollecting himself, he threw it from him with a dash, betraying some irritation, and folded his hands.

"'Lavender,'" read Charlotte.

"What should make any one choose that?" cried Eveleen.

"I know!" said Mrs. Edmonstone, looking up. "I shall never forget the tufts of lavender round the kitchen garden at Stylehurst."

Philip smiled. Charlotte proceeded, and Charles saw Laura's colour deepening as she bent over her work.

"'Lavender—steadfastness—Strafford—Cordelia, in 'King Lear'—the late war.' How funny!" cried Charlotte. "For hear the next: 'Honeysuckle—steadfastness—Lord Strafford—Cordelia—the present time.' Why, Laura, you must have copied it from Philip's."

Laura neither looked nor spoke. Philip could hardly command his countenance as Eveleen laughed, and told him he was much flattered by those becoming blushes. But here Charles broke in,—"Come, make haste, Charlotte, don't be all night about it;" and as Charlotte paused, as if to make some dangerous remark, he caught the paper and read the next himself. Nothing so startled Philip as this desire to cover their confusion. Laura was only sensible of the relief of having attention drawn from her by the laugh that followed.

"'A shamrock—Captain Rock—the tailor that was 'blue moulded for want of a bating'—Pat Riotism—the time of Malachy with the collar of gold."

"Eva!" cried Charlotte.

"Nonsense," said Eveleen; "I am glad I know your tastes, Charles. They do you honour."

"More than yours do, if these are yours," said Charles, reading them contemptuously; "'Rose—generosity—Charles Edward—Catherine Seyton—the civil wars.'"

"You had better not have disowned Charlie's, Lady Eveleen," said Guy.

"Nay, do you think I would put up with such a set as

these?" retorted Charles; "I am not fallen so low as the essence of young-ladyism."

"What can you find to say against them?" said Eveleen.

"Nothing," said Charles. "No one ever can find any thing to say for or against young ladies' tastes."

"You seem to be rather in the case of the tailor yourself," said Guy, "ready to do battle, if you could but get any opposition."

"Only tell me," said Amy, "how you could wish to live in the civil wars?"

"O, because they would be so entertaining."

"There's Paddy, genuine Paddy, at last!" exclaimed Charles. "Depend upon it, the conventional young lady won't do, Eva."

After much more discussion, and one or two more papers, came Guy's—the last. "'Heather—Truth—King Charles—Sir Galahad—the present time.'"

"Sir how much?" exclaimed Charles.

"Don't you know him?" said Guy. "Sir Galahad—the Knight of the Siege Perilous—who won the Saint Greal."

"What language is that?" said Charles.

"What! Don't you know the Morte d'Arthur? I thought every one did. Don't you, Philip?"

"I once looked into it. It is very curious, in classical English; but it is a book no one could read through."

"Oh!" cried Guy, indignantly, then; "but you only looked into it. If you had lived with its two fat volumes, you could not help delighting in it. It was my boating-book, for at least three summers."

"That accounts for it," said Philip; "a book so studied in boyhood acquires a charm apart from its actual merits."

"But it has actual merits. The depth, the mystery, the allegory—the beautiful character of some of the knights."

"You look through the medium of your imagination," said Philip; "but you must pardon others for seeing a great sameness of character and adventure, and for disapproving of the strange mixture of religion and romance."

"You've never read it," said Guy, striving to speak patiently.

"A cursory view is sufficient to show whether a book will repay the time spent in reading it."

"A cursory view enables one to judge better than making it your study? Eh, Philip?" said Charles.

"It is no paradox. The actual merits are better seen by an unprejudiced stranger than by an old friend, who lends them graces of his own devising."

Charles laughed; Guy pushed back his chair, and went to look out of the window. Perhaps Philip enjoyed thus chafing his temper; for after all he had said to Laura, it was satisfactory to see his opinion justified, so that he might not feel himself unfair. It relieved his uneasiness lest his understanding with Laura should be observed. It had been in great peril that evening, for as the girls went up to bed, Eveleen gaily said, "Why, Laura, have you quarrelled with Captain Morville?"

"How can you say such a thing, Eva? Good-night." And Laura escaped into her own room.

"What's the meaning of it, Amy?" pursued Eveleen.

"Only a stranger makes us more formal," said Amy.

"What an innocent you are! It is of no use to talk to you!" said Eveleen, running away.

"No; but Eva," said Amy, pursuing her; "don't go off with a wrong fancy. Charles has teased Laura so much about Philip, that of course he makes her shy of him before strangers; and it would never have done to laugh about their choosing the same things, when Mr. Thorndale was there."

"I must be satisfied, I suppose. I know that is what you think, for you could not say any other."

"But what do you think?" said Amy, puzzled.

"I won't tell you, little innocence—it would only shock you."

"Nothing you *really thought* about Laura could shock me," said Amy; "I don't mean what you might say in play."

"Well, then, shall you think me in play or earnest when I say that I think Laura likes Philip very much?"

"In play," said Amy; "for I know if we had not got our own Charlie to show us what a brother is, we should think of Philip as just the same as a brother."

"A brother! You are pretending to be more simple than you really are, Amy! Don't you know what I mean?"

"O," said Amy, her cheeks lighting up, "that must be only play, for he has never asked her."

"Ah! but suppose she was in a state just ready to be asked."

"No, that could never be, for he could never ask her."

"Why not, little Amy?"

"Because we are cousins, and every thing!" said Amy, confused. "Don't talk any more about it, Eva; for though I know it is all play, I don't like it, and mamma would not wish me to talk of such things. And don't you laugh about it, dear Eva, pray; for it only makes every one uncomfortable. Pray!"

"Amy had a very persuasive way of saying "pray," and Eveleen thought she must yield to it. Besides, she respected Laura and Captain Morville too much to resolve to laugh at them, whatever she might do when her fear of the Captain made her saucy.

Mrs. Edmonstone thought it best on all accounts to sit in the drawing-room the next morning; but she need not have taken so much pains to chaperon her young ladies, for the gentlemen did not come near them.

Laura was more at ease in manner, though very far from happy, for she was restlessly eager for a talk with Philip; while he was resolved not to seek a private interview, sure that it would excite suspicion, and willing to lose the consciousness of his underhand proceedings.

This was the day of the dinner-party, and Laura's heart leaped as she calculated that it must fall to Philip's lot to hand her in to dinner. She was not mistaken, he did give her his arm; and they found themselves most favourably placed, for Philip's other neighbour was Mrs. Brownlow, talking at a great rate to Mr. de Courcy, and on Laura's side was the rather deaf Mr. Hayley, who had quite enough to do to talk to Miss Brownlow. Charles was not at table, and not one suspicious eye could rest on them; yet it was not till the second course was in progress that he said any thing which the whole world might not have heard. Something had passed about Canterbury, and its distance from Hollywell.

"I can be here often," said Philip.

"I am glad."

"If you can only be guarded,—and I think you are becoming so."

"Is this a time to speak of ——? Oh, don't!"

"It is the only time. No one is attending, and I have something to say to you."

Overpowering her dire confusion, in obedience to him, she looked at the epergne, and listened.

"You have acted prudently. You have checked—" and he indicated Guy, "without producing more than moderate annoyance. You have only to guard your self-possession."

"It is very foolish," she murmured.

"Ordinary women say so, and rest contented with the folly. You can do better things."

There was a thrill of joy at finding him conversing with her as "his own," it overcame her embarrassment and alarm, and wishes he would not choose such a time for speaking.

"How shall I?" said she.

"Employ yourself. Employ and strengthen your mind!"

"How shall I, and without you?"

"Find something to prevent you from dwelling on the future. That drawing is dreamy work, employing the fingers, and leaving the mind free."

"I have been trying to read, but I cannot fix my mind."

"Suppose you take what will demand attention. Mathematics, algebra. I will send you my first book of algebra, and it will help you to work down many useless dreams and anxieties."

"Thank you; pray do, I shall be very glad of it."

"You will find it give a power and stability to your mind, and no longer have to complain of frivolous occupation."

"I don't feel frivolous now," said Laura, sadly; "I don't know why it is that every thing is so altered, I am really happier, but my light heart is gone."

"You have but now learnt the full powers of your soul, Laura; you have left the world of childhood, with the gay feelings which have no depth."

"I have what is better," she whispered.

"You have, indeed. But those feelings must be regulated; and strengthening the intellect strengthens the governing power."

"Philip, with all his sense, was mystifying himself, because he was departing from right, the only true "good

sense." His right judgment in all things was becoming obscure, so he talked metaphysical jargon instead of plain, practical truth, and thought he was teaching Laura to strengthen her powers of mind, instead of giving way to dreams, when he was only leading her to stifle meditation, and thus securing her complete submission to himself.

She was happier after this conversation, and better able to pay attention to the guests, nor did she feel guilty when obliged to play and sing in the evening—for she knew he must own that she could do no otherwise.

Lady Eveleen gave, however, its brilliancy to the party. She had something wonderfully winning and fascinating about her, and Philip owned to himself that it took no small resolution on the part of Mr. Thorndale to keep so steadily aloof from the party in the bay window where she was reigning like a queen, and inspiring gaiety like a fairy. She made Guy sing with her; it was the first time he had ever sung, except among themselves, as Mrs. Edmonstone had never known whether he would like to be asked; but Eveleen refused to sing some of the Irish melodies unless he would join her, and without making any difficulty he did so. Mrs. Brownlow professed to be electrified, and Eveleen, declaring that she knew she sung like a peacock, told Mrs. Brownlow that the thing to hear was Sir Guy singing glees with Laura and Amy. Of course, they were obliged to sing. Mrs. Brownlow was delighted; and as she had considerable knowledge of music, they all grew eager; and Philip thought it very foolish of Guy to allow so much of his talent and enthusiasm to display themselves.

When all the people were gone, and the home party had wished each other good-night, Philip lingered in the drawing-room to finish a letter. Guy, after helping Charles up-stairs, came down a few moments after, to fetch something which he had forgotten. Philip looked up,—"You contributed greatly to the entertainment this evening," he said.

Guy coloured, not quite sure that this was not said sarcastically, and provoked with himself for being vexed.

"You think one devoid of the sixth sense has no right to speak," said Philip.

"I can't expect all to think it, as I do, one of the best things in this world or out of it," said Guy, speaking quickly.

"I know it is so felt by those who understand its secrets,"

said Philip. "I would not depreciate it; so you may hear me patiently, Guy. I only meant to warn you, that it is often the means of bringing persons into undesirable intimacies, from which they cannot disentangle themselves as easily as they enter them."

A flush crossed Guy's cheek, but it passed, and he simply said,—"I suppose it may. Good night."

Philip looked after him, and pondered on what it was that had annoyed him—manner, words, or advice. He ascribed it to Guy's unwillingness to be advised, since he had observed that his counsel was apt to irritate him, though his good sense often led him to follow it. In the present case, Philip thought Mrs. Brownlow and her society by no means desirable for a youth like Guy; and he was quite right.

Philip and his friend went the next morning; and in the afternoon Laura received the book of algebra,—a very original first gift from a lover. It came openly, with a full understanding that she was to use it by his recommendation; her mother and brother both thought they understood the motive, which one thought very wise, and the other very characteristic.

Lord Kilcoran and Lady Eveleen also departed, Eveleen very sorry to go, though a little comforted by the prospect of seeing Laura so soon in Ireland, where she would set her going in all kinds of "rationalities—reading, and school-teaching, and every thing else."

"Ay," said Charles, when all were out of hearing but his mother, "and I shrewdly suspect the comfort would be still greater if it was Sir Guy Morville who was coming."

"It would be no bad thing," said his mother; "Eveleen is a nice creature, with great capabilities."

"Capabilities! but will they ever come to any thing?"

"In a few years," said Mrs. Edmonstone; "and he is a mere boy at present, so there is plenty of time for both to develop themselves."

"Most true, madame mère; but it remains to be proved whether the liking for Sir Guy, which has taken hold of my Lady Eveleen, is strong enough to withstand all the coquetting with young Irishmen, and all the idling at Kilcoran."

"I hope she has something better to be relied on than the liking for Sir Guy."

"You may well do so, for I think he has no notion of

throwing off his allegiance to you,—his first and only love. He liked very well to make fun with Eva; but he regarded her rather as a siren who drew him off from his Latin and Greek."

"Yes; I am ashamed of myself for such a fit of match-making! Forget it, Charlie, as fast as you can."

CHAPTER VII.

This warld's wealth, when I think o't,
Its pride. and a' the lave o't,
Fie, fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't.

BURNS.

IN another week Mr. Edmonstone and his eldest daughter were to depart on their Irish journey. Laura, besides the natural pain in leaving home, was sorry to be no longer near Philip, especially as it was not likely that he would be still at Broadstone on their return; yet she was so restless and dissatisfied, that any change was welcome, and the fear of betraying herself almost took away the pleasure of his presence.

He met them at the railway-station at Broadstone, where Mr. Edmonstone, finding himself much too early, recollected something he had forgotten in the town, and left his daughter to walk up and down the platform under Philip's charge. They felt it a precious interval, but both were out of spirits, and could hardly profit by it.

"You will be gone long before we come back," said Laura.

"In a fortnight or three weeks, probably."

"But you will still be able to come to Hollywell now and then?"

"I hope so. It is all the pleasure I can look for. We shall never see such a summer again."

"Oh, it has been a memorable one!"

"Memorable! Yes. It has given me an assurance that compensates for all I have lost; yet it has made me feel, more than ever before, how poverty withers a man's hopes."

"O Philip, I always thought your poverty a great noble thing!"

"You thought like a generous-tempered girl, who has known nothing of its effects."

"And do you know that Guy says, the thing to be proud of, is of holding the place you do, without the aid of rank or riches."

"I would not have it otherwise,—I would not for worlds that my father had acted otherwise," said Philip. "You understand that, Laura."

Of course I do."

But when you speak,—when Guy speaks of my holding the place I do, you little know what it is to feel that powers of usefulness are wasted, to know I have the means of working my way to honour and distinction, such as you would rejoice in, Laura, to have it all within, yet feel it thrown away. Locksley Hall, again,—'every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys.'"

"I wish there was any thing to be done," said Laura.

"It is my profession that is the bar to every thing. I have sold the best years of my life, and for what? To see my sister degrade herself by that marriage."

"That is the real grief," said Laura.

"But for that, I should never have cast a look back on what I relinquished. However, why do I talk of these things, these vain regrets? They only recurred because my welfare does not concern myself alone,—and here's your father."

Mr. Edmonstone returned, out of breath, in too much bustle to remark his daughter's blushes. Even when the train was moving off, he still had his head out at the window, calling to Philip that they should expect a visit from him as soon as *ever* they returned.

Such cordiality gave Philip a pang; and in bitterness of spirit he walked back to the barracks. On the way he met Mrs. Deane, who wanted to consult him about inviting his cousin, Sir Guy, to a dinner-party she intended to give next week. "Such an agreeable, sensible youth, and we feel we owe him some attention, he took so much pains to make apologies about the ball."

"I dare say he will be very happy to come."

"We will write at once. He is a very fine young man, without a shade of vanity or nonsense."

"Yes, he has very pleasant, unaffected manners."

"I am sure he will do credit to his estate. It is a very handsome fortune, is it not?"

"It is a very large property."

"I am glad of it; I have no doubt we shall see him one of the first men of his time."

These words brought into contrast in Philip's mind the difference between Guy's position and his own. The mere possession of wealth was winning for Guy, at an age when his merits could only be negative, that estimation which his own tried character had scarcely achieved, placing him not merely on a level with himself, but in a situation where happiness and influence came unbidden. His own talent, attainments, and equal, if not superior claims, to gentle blood, could not procure him what seemed to lie at Guy's feet. His own ability and Laura's heart alone were what wealth could not affect, yet when he thought how the want of it wasted the one, and injured the hopes of the other, he recurred to certain visions of his sister Margaret's, in days gone by, of what he was to do as Sir Philip, lord of Redclyffe. He was speculating on what would have happened had Guy died in his sickly infancy, when, suddenly recollecting himself, he turned his mind to other objects.

Guy was not much charmed with Mrs. Deane's invitation. He said he knew he must go, to make up for his rudeness about the ball; but he grumbled enough to make Mrs. Edmonstone laugh at him for being so stupid as to want to stay hum-drum in the chimney corner. No doubt it was very pleasant there. There was that peculiar snugness which belongs to a remnant of a large party, when each member of it feels bound to prevent the rest from being dull. Guy devoted himself to Charles more than ever, and in the fear that he might miss the late variety of amusement, exerted even more of his powers of entertainment than Lady Eveleen had called forth.

There were grave readings in the mornings, and long walks in the afternoons, when he dragged Charles, in his chair, into many a place he had never expected to see again, and enabled him to accompany his mother and sisters in many a delightful expedition. In the evening there was music, or light reading, especially poetry, as this was encouraged by Mrs. Edmonstone, in the idea that it was better that so excitable and

enthusiastic a person as Guy should have his objects of admiration tested by Charles's love of ridicule.

Mr. Edmonstone had left to Guy the office of keeping the 1st of September, one which he greatly relished. Indeed, when he thought of his own deserted manors, he was heard to exclaim, in commiseration for the neglect, "Poor partridges!" The Hollywell shooting was certainly not like that at Redclyffe, where he could hardly walk out of his own grounds, whereas here he had to bear in mind so many boundaries, that Philip was expecting to have to help him out of some direful scrape. He had generally walked over the whole extent, and assured himself that the birds were very wild, and Bustle the best of dogs, before breakfast, so as to be ready for all the occupations of the day. He could scarcely be grateful when the neighbours, thinking it must be very dull for him to be left alone with Mrs. Edmonstone and her crippled son, used to ask him to shoot or dine. He always lamented at first, and ended by enjoying himself.

One night, he came home in such a state of eagerness, that he must needs tell his good news; and, finding no one in the drawing-room, he ran up stairs, opened Charles's door, and exclaimed,—"There's to be a concert at Broadstone!" Then perceiving that Charles was fast asleep, he retreated noiselessly, reserving his rejoicings till morning, when it appeared that Charles had heard, but had woven the announcement into a dream.

This concert filled Guy's head. His only grief was that it was to be in the evening, so that Charles could not go to it, and his wonder was not repressed at finding that Philip did not mean to favour it with his presence, since Guy would suffice for squire to Mrs. Edmonstone and her daughters.

In fact, Philip was somewhat annoyed by the perpetual conversation about the concert, and on the day on which it was to take place, resolved on making a long expedition to visit the ruins of an old abbey, far out of all reports of it. As he was setting out, he was greeted, in a very loud voice, by Mr. Gordon.

"Hollo, Morville! how are you? So you have great doings to-night, I hear!" and he had only just forced himself from him, when he was again accosted, this time in a hasty, embarrassed manner—

"I beg your pardon, sir, but the ties of relationship——"

He drew himself up as if he were on parade, faced round, and replied with an emphatic "Sir!" as he beheld a thin, foreign-looking man, in a somewhat flashy style of dress, who, bowing low, repeated breathlessly,—

"I beg your pardon—Sir Guy Morville, I believe?"

"Captain Morville, sir."

"I beg your pardon—I mistook. A thousand pardons," and he retreated; while Philip, after a moment's wonder, pursued his walk.

The Hollywell party entered Broadstone in a very different temper, and greatly did they enjoy the concert, both for themselves and for each other. In the midst of it, while Amy was intent on the Italian words of a song, Guy touched her hand, and pointed to a line in the programme—

Solo on the Violin . . . MR. S. B. DIXON.

She looked up in his face with an expression full of inquiry; but it was no time for speaking, and she only saw how the colour mantled on his cheek when the violinist appeared, and how he looked down the whole time of the performance, only now and then venturing a furtive though earnest glance.

He did not say any thing till they were seated in the carriage, and then astonished Mrs. Edmonstone by exclaiming,—

"It must be my uncle!—I am sure it must. I'll ride to Broadstone the first thing to-morrow, and find him out."

"Your uncle!" exclaimed Mrs. Edmonstone. "I never thought of that."

"S. B. Dixon!" said Guy. "I know his name is Sebastian. It cannot be any one else. You know he went to America. How curious it is! I suppose there is no fear of his being gone before I can come in to-morrow?"

"I should think not. Those musical people keep late hours."

"I would go before breakfast. Perhaps it would be best to go to old Redford, he will know all about him; or to the music-shop. I am so glad! It is the very thing I always wished."

"Did you?" said Mrs. Edmonstone to herself. "I can't say every one would be of your mind; but I can't help liking

you the better for it. I wish the man had kept further off. I wish Mr. Edmonstone was at home. I hope no harm will come of it. I wonder what I ought to do. Shall I caution him? No; I don't think I can spoil his happiness—and perhaps the man may be improved. He is his nearest relation, and I have no right to interfere. His own good sense will protect him—but I wish Mr. Edmonstone was at home."

She therefore did not check his expressions of delight, nor object to his going to Broadstone early the next morning. He had just dismounted before the inn-yard, when a boy put a note into his hand, and he was so absorbed in its contents, that he did not perceive Philip till after two greetings had passed unheard. When at length he was recalled, he started, and exclaimed, rapturously, as he put the note into his cousin's hand,—

"See here—it is himself!"

"Who?"

"My uncle. My poor mother's own brother."

"Sebastian Bach Dixon," read Philip. "Ha! it was he who took me for you yesterday."

"I saw him at the concert—I was sure it could be no other. I came in on purpose to find him, and here he is waiting for me. Is not it a happy chance?"

"Happy!" echoed Philip, in a far different tone.

"How I have longed for this—for any one who could remember and tell me of her—of my mother—my poor, dear young mother! And her own brother! I have been thinking of it all night, and he knows I am here, and is as eager as myself. He is waiting for me," ended Guy, hurrying off.

"Stop!" said Philip, gravely. "Think before acting. I seriously advise you to have nothing to do with this man, at least, personally. Let me see him, and learn what he wants."

"He wants me," impatiently answered Guy. "You are not his nephew."

"Thank heaven!" thought Philip. "Do you imagine your relationship is the sole cause of his seeking you?"

"I don't know—I don't care!" cried Guy, with vehemence. "I will not listen to suspicions of my mother's brother."

"It is more than suspicion. Hear me calmly. I speak for your good. I know this man's influence was fatal to your

father. I know he did all in his power to widen the breach with your grandfather."

"That was eighteen years ago," said Guy, walking on, biting his lip in a fiery fit of impatience.

"You will not hear. Remember, that his position and associates render him no fit companion for you. Nay, listen patiently. You cannot help the relationship. I would not have you do otherwise than assist him. Let him not complain of neglect, but be on your guard. He will either seriously injure you, or be a burden for life."

"I have heard you so far—I can hear no more," said Guy, no longer restraining his impetuosity. "He is my uncle, that I know; I care for nothing else. Position—nonsense! what has that to do with it? I will not be set against him."

He strode off; but in a few moments turned back, overtook Philip, said,—

"Thank you for your advice. I beg your pardon for my hastiness. You mean kindly, but I must see my uncle." And, without waiting for an answer, he was gone.

In short space he was in the little parlour of the music-shop, shaking hands with his uncle, and exclaiming,—

"I am so glad!—I hoped it was you!"

"It is very noble-hearted! I might have known it would be so with the son of my dearest sister and of my generous friend!" cried Mr. Dixon, with eagerness that had a theatrical air, though it was genuine feeling that filled his eyes with tears.

"I saw your name last night," continued Guy. "I would have tried to speak to you at once, but I was obliged to stay with Mrs. Edmonstone, as I was the only gentleman with her."

"Ah! I thought it possible you might not be able to follow the dictates of your own heart; but this is a fortunate conjuncture, in the absence of your guardian."

Guy recollected Philip's remonstrance, and it crossed him whether his guardian might be of the same mind; but he felt confident in having told all to Mrs. Edmonstone.

"How did you know I was here?" he asked.

"I learnt it in a most gratifying way. Mr. Redford, without knowing our connexion—for on that I will always be silent—mentioned that the finest tenor he had ever known, in an amateur, belonged to his pupil, Sir Guy Morville. You

can imagine my feelings at finding you so near, and learning that you had inherited your dear mother's talent and taste."

The conversation was long, for there was much to hear. Mr. Dixon had kept up a correspondence at long intervals with Markham, from whom he heard that his sister's child survived, and was kindly treated by his grandfather; and inquiring again on the death of old Sir Guy, learned that he was gone to live with his guardian, whose name and residence Markham had not thought fit to divulge. He had been much rejoiced to hear his name from the music-master, and he went on to tell how he had been misled by the name of Morville into addressing the captain, who had a good deal of general resemblance to Guy's father, a fine tall young man, of the same upright, proud deportment. He supposed he was the son of the Archdeacon, and remembering how strongly his own proceedings had been discountenanced at Stylehurst, had been much disconcerted; and deeming the encounter a bad omen, had used more caution in his advances to his nephew. It was from sincere affection that he sought his acquaintance, though very doubtful as to the reception he might meet, and was both delighted and surprised at such unembarrassed, open-hearted affection.

The uncle and nephew were not made to understand each other. Sebastian Dixon was a man of little education, and when, in early youth, his talents had placed him high in his own line, he had led a careless, extravagant life. Though an evil friend, and fatal counsellor, he had been truly attached to Guy's father, and the secret engagement, and runaway marriage with his beautiful sister, had been the romance of his life, promoted by him with no selfish end. He was a proud and passionate man, and resenting Sir Guy's refusal to receive his sister as a daughter, almost as much as Sir Guy was incensed at the marriage, had led his brother-in-law to act in a manner which cut off the hope of reconciliation, and obliged Archdeacon Morville to give up his cause. He had gloried in supporting his sister and her husband, and enabling them to set the old baronet at defiance. But young Morville's territorial pride could not brook that he should be maintained, and especially that his child, the heir of Redclyffe, should be born while he was living, at the expense of a musician. This feeling, aided by a yearning for home, and a secret love for his father, mastered his resentment; he took his resolution, quar-

relled with Dixon, and carried off his wife, bent with desperation on forcing his father into receiving her.

Sebastian had not surmounted his anger at this step when he learned its fatal consequences. Ever since that time, nothing had prospered with him: he had married, and sunk himself lower, and though he had an excellent engagement, the days were past when he was the fashion, and his gains and his triumphs were not what they had been. He had a long list of disappointments and jealousies with which to entertain Guy, who, on his side, though resolved to like him, and dreading to be too refined to be friends with his relations, could not feel as thoroughly pleased as he intended to have been.

Music was, however, a subject on which they could meet with equal enthusiasm, and by means of this, together with the aid of his own imagination, Guy contrived to be very happy. He stayed with his uncle as long as he could, and promised to spend a day with him in London, on his way to Oxford, in October.

The next morning, when Philip knew that Guy would be with his tutor, he walked to Hollywell, came straight up to his aunt's dressing-room, asked her to send Charlotte down to practise, and, seating himself opposite to her, began,—

"What do you mean to do about this unfortunate rencontre?"

"Do you mean Guy and his uncle? He is very much pleased, poor boy! I like his entire freedom from false shame!"

"A little true shame would be hardly misplaced about such a connexion!"

"It is not his fault, and I hope it will not be his misfortune," said Mrs. Edmonstone.

"That it will certainly be," replied Philip, "if we are not on our guard; and, indeed, if we are, there is little to be done with one so wilful. I might as well have interfered with the course of a whirlwind."

"No, no, Philip; he is too candid to be wilful."

"I cannot be of your opinion, when I have seen him rushing into this acquaintance, in spite of the warnings he must have had here—to say nothing of myself."

"Nay, there I must defend him, though you will think me very unwise; I could not feel that I ought to withhold him from taking some notice of so near a relation."

Philip did think her so unwise, that he could only reply, gravely,—

"We must hope it may produce no evil effects."

"How!" she exclaimed, much alarmed. "Have you heard any thing against him?"

"You remember, of course, that Guy's father was regularly the victim of this Dixon."

"Yes, yes; but he has had enough to sober him. Do you know nothing more?" said Mrs. Edmonstone, growing nervously anxious lest she had been doing wrong in her husband's absence.

"I have been inquiring about him from Old Redford, and I should judge him to be a most dangerous companion; as, indeed, I could have told from his whole air, which is completely that of a *roué*."

"You have seen him then?"

"Yes. He paid me the compliment of taking me for Sir Guy, and of course made off in dismay when he discovered on whom he had fallen. I have seldom seen a less creditable-looking individual."

"But what did Mr. Redford say? Did he know of the connection?"

"No; I am happy to say he did not. The fellow has decency enough not to boast of that. Well, Redford did not know much of him personally; he said he had once been much thought of, and had considerable talent and execution: but taste changes, or he has lost something, so that though he stands tolerably high in his profession, he is not a leader. So much for his musical reputation. As to his character, he is one of those people who are called no one's enemy but their own, exactly the introduction, Guy has hitherto happily wanted, to every sort of mischief."

"I think," said Mrs. Edmonstone, trying to console herself, "that Guy is too much afraid of small faults to be invited by larger evils. While he punishes himself for an idle word, he is not likely to go wrong in greater matters."

"Not at present."

"Is the man in debt or difficulties? Guy heard nothing of that, and I thought it a good sign."

"I don't suppose he is. He ought not, for he has a fixed salary, besides what he gets by playing at concerts when

it is not the London season. The wasting money on a spendthrift relation would be a far less evil than what I apprehend."

"I wish I knew what to do! It is very unlucky that your uncle is from home."

"Very."

Mrs. Edmonstone was frightened by the sense of responsibility, and was only anxious to catch hold of something to direct her."

"What would you have me do?" she asked, helplessly.

"Speak seriously to Guy. He must attend to you; he cannot fly out with a woman as he does with me. Show him the evils that must result from such an intimacy. If Dixon was in distress I would not say a word, for he would be bound to assist him; but as it is, the acquaintance can serve no purpose but degrading Guy, and showing him the way to evil. Above all, make a point of his giving up visiting him in London. That is the sure road to evil. A youth of his age, under the conduct of a worn-out *roué*, connected with the theatres! I can hardly imagine any thing more mischievous."

"Yes, yes; I will speak to him," said Mrs. Edmonstone, perfectly appalled.

She promised, but she found the fulfilment difficult, in her dislike to vexing Guy, her fear of saying what was wrong, and a doubt, whether the appearance of persecuting Mr. Dixon was not the very way to prevent Guy's own good sense from finding out his true character; so she waited, hoping Mr. Edmonstone might return before Guy went to Oxford, or that he might write decisively.

Mrs. Edmonstone might have known her husband better than to expect him to write decisively when he had neither herself nor Philip at his elbow. The same post had brought him a letter from Guy, mentioning his meeting with his uncle, and frankly explaining his plans for London; another from Philip, calling on him to use all his authority to prevent this intercourse, and a third from his wife. Bewildered between them, he took them to his sister, who, being as puzzle-headed as himself, and only hearing his involved history of the affair, confused him still more; so he wrote to Philip, saying he was sorry the fellow had turned up, but he would guard against him. He told Guy he was

sorry to say that his uncle used to be a sad scamp, and he must take care, or it would be his poor father's story over again; and to Mrs. Edmonstone he wrote that it was very odd that every thing always did go wrong when he was away.

He thought these letters a great achievement, but his wife's perplexity was not materially relieved.

After considering a good while, she at length spoke to Guy; but it was not at a happy time, for Philip, despairing of her, had just taken on himself to remonstrate, and had angered him to the verge of an outbreak.

Mrs. Edmonstone, as mildly as she could, urged on him that such intercourse could bring him little satisfaction, and might be very inconvenient; that his uncle was in no distress, and did not require assistance; and that it was too probable that in seeking him out he might meet with persons who might unsettle his principles,—in short, that he had much better give up the visit to London.

"This is Philip's advice," said Guy.

"It is; but——"

Guy looked impatient, and she paused.

"You must forgive me," he said, "if I follow my own judgment. If Mr. Edmonstone chose to lay his commands on me, I suppose I must submit; but I cannot see that I am bound to obey Philip."

"Not to obey, certainly; but his advice——"

"He is prejudiced and unjust," said Guy. "I don't believe that my uncle would attempt to lead me into bad company; and surely you would not have me neglect or look coldly on one who was so much attached to my parents. If he is not a gentleman, and is looked down on by the world, it is not for his sister's son to make him conscious of it."

"I like your feeling, Guy; I can say nothing against it, but that I am much afraid your uncle is not highly principled."

"You have only Philip's account of him."

"You are resolved?"

"Yes. I do not like not to take your advice, but I do believe this is my duty. I do not think my determination is made in self-will," said Guy, thoughtfully; "I cannot think that I ought to neglect my uncle, because I happen to have been born in a different station, which is all I have heard proved against him," he added, smiling. "You will forgive me, will you not, for not following your advice? for really and truly.

if you will let me say so, I think you would not have given it if Philip had not been talking to you."

Mrs. Edmonstone confessed, with a smile, that perhaps it was so; but said she trusted much to Philip's knowledge of the world. Guy agreed to this; though still declaring Philip had no right to set him against his uncle, and there the discussion ended.

Guy went to London. Philip thought him very wilful and his aunt very weak; and Mr. Edmonstone, on coming home, said it could not be helped, and he wished to hear no more about the matter.

CHAPTER XII.

Her playful smile, her buoyance wild,
Bespeak the gentle mirthful child;
But in her forehead's broad expanse,
Her chastened tones, her thoughtful glance,
Is mingled, with the child's light glee,
The modest maiden's dignity.

ONE summer's day, two years after the ball and review, Mary Ross and her father were finishing their early dinner, when she said,—

"If you don't want me this afternoon, papa, I think I shall walk to Hollywell. You know Eveleen de Courcy is there."

"No, I did not. What has brought her?"

"As Charles expresses it, she has over-polked herself in London, and is sent here for quiet and country air. I want to call on her, and to ask Sir Guy to give me some idea as to the singing the children should practise for the school feast."

"Then you think Sir Guy will come to the feast?"

"I reckon on him to conceal all the deficiencies in the children's singing."

"He won't desert you, as he did Mrs. Brownlow?"

"O papa! you surely did not think him to blame in that affair?"

"Honestly, Mary, if I thought about the matter at all, I thought it a pity he should go so much to the Brownlows."

"I believe I could tell you the history, if you thought it worth while; and though it may be gossip, I should like you to do justice to Sir Guy."

"Very well; though I don't think there is much danger of my doing otherwise. I only wondered he should become intimate there at all."

"I believe Mrs. Edmonstone thinks it right he should see

as much of the world as possible, and not be always at home in their own set."

"Fair and proper."

"You know, she has shown him all the people she could, —had Eveleen staying there, and the Miss Nortons, and hunted him out to parties, when he had rather have been at home."

"I thought he was fond of society. I remember your telling me how amused you were with his enjoyment of his first ball."

"Ah! he was two years younger then, and all was new. He seems to me too deep and sensitive not to find more pain than pleasure in commonplace society. I have sometimes seen that he cannot speak either lightly or harshly of what he disapproves, and people don't understand him. I was once sitting next him, when there was some talking going on about an elopement; he did not laugh, looked almost distressed, and at last said, in a very low voice, to me, "I wish people would not laugh about such things."

"He is an extraordinary mixture of gaiety of heart and seriousness."

"Well, when Mrs. Brownlow had her nieces with her, and was giving those musical parties, his voice made him valuable; and Mrs. Edmonstone told him he ought to go to them. I believe he liked it at first, but he found there was no end to it; it took up a great deal of time, and was a style of thing altogether that was not desirable. Mrs. Edmonstone thought at first his reluctance was only shyness and stay-at-home nonsense, that ought to be overcome; but when she had been there, and saw how Mrs. Brownlow beset him, and the unpleasant fuss they made about his singing, she quite came round to his mind, and was very sorry she had exposed him to so much that was disagreeable."

"Well, Mary, I am glad to hear your account. My impression arose from something Philip Morville said."

"Captain Morville never can approve of any thing Sir Guy does! It is not like Charles."

"How improved Charles Edmonstone is. He has lost that spirit of repining and sarcasm, and lives as if he had an object."

"Yes; he employs himself now, and teaches Amy to do the same. You know, after the governess went, we were

afraid little Amy would never do any thing but wait on Charles, and idle in her pretty gentle way; but when he turned to better things so did she, and her mind has been growing all this time. Perhaps you don't see it, for she has not lost her likeness to a kitten, and looks all demure silence with the elders, but she takes in what the wise say."

"She is a very good little thing; and I dare say will not be the worse for growing up slowly."

"Those two sisters are specimens of vast and slow growth. Laura has always seemed to be so much more than one year older than Amy, especially of late. She is more like five-and-twenty than twenty. I wonder if she overworks herself. But how we have lingered over our dinner!"

By half-past three, Mary was entering a copse which led into Mr. Edmonstone's field, when she heard gay tones, and a snatch of one of the sweetest of old songs,—

> Weep no more, lady; lady, weep no more,
> Thy sorrow is in vain;
> For violets plucked, the sweetest showers
> Will ne'er make grow again.

A merry, clear laugh followed; and a turn in the path showed her Guy, Amy, and Charlotte, busy over a sturdy stock of eglantine. Guy, little changed in these two years,—not much taller, and more agile than robust,—was lopping vigorously with his great pruning-knife, Amabel nursing a bundle of drooping rose branches, Charlotte, her bonnet in a garland of wild sweet-brier, holding the matting, and continually getting entangled in the long thorny wreaths.

"And here comes the 'friar of orders grey,' to tell you so," exclaimed Guy, as Mary, in her grey dress, came on them.

"Oh, that is right, dear good friar!" said Amy.

"We are so busy," said Charlotte; "Guy has made Mr. Markham send all these choice buds from Redclyffe."

"Not from the park," said Guy, "we don't deal much in gardening; but Markham is a great florist, and these are his bounties."

"And are you cutting that beautiful wild rose to pieces?"

"Is it not a pity?" said Amy. "We have used up all the stocks in the garden, and this is to be transplanted in the autumn."

"She has been consoling it all the time by telling it it is

for its good," said Guy; "cutting off wild shoots, and putting in better things."

"I never said any thing so pretty; and, after all, I don't know that the grand roses will be equal to these purple shoots and blushing buds with long whiskers."

"So Sir Guy was singing about the violets plucked to comfort you. But you must not leave off, I want to see how you do it. I am gardener enough to like to look on."

"We have only two more to put in."

Knife and fingers were busy, and Mary admired the dexterity with which the slit was made in the green bark, well armed with firm red thorns, and the tiny scarlet gem inserted, and bound with cotton and matting. At the least critical parts of the work, she asked after the rest of the party, and was answered that papa had driven Charles out in the pony carriage, and that Laura and Eveleen were sitting on the lawn, reading and working with mamma. Eveleen was better, but not strong, or equal to much exertion in the heat. Mary went on to speak of her school feast, and ask her question.

"O Guy, you must not go before that!" cried Charlotte.

"Are you going away?"

"He is very naughty, indeed," said Charlotte. "He is going, I don't know where all, to be stupid, and read mathematics."

"A true bill, I am sorry to say," said Guy; "I am to join a reading-party for the latter part of the vacation."

"I hope not before Thursday week, though we are not asking you to any thing worth staying for."

"Oh, surely you need not go before that," said Amy, "need you?"

"No; I believe I may stay till Friday, and I should delight in the feast, thank you, Miss Ross,—I want to study such things. A bit more matting, Amy, if you please. There, I think that will do."

"Excellently. Here is its name. See how neatly Charlie has printed it, Mary. Is it not odd, that he prints so well when he writes so badly?"

"'The Seven Sisters.' There, fair sisterhood, grow and thrive, till I come to transplant you in the autumn. Are there any more?"

"No, that is the last. Now, Mary, let us come to mam 'ma."

Guy waited to clear the path of the numerous trailing briery branches, and the others walked on, Amy telling how sorry they were to lose Guy's vacation, but that he thought he could not give time enough to his studies here, and had settled, at Oxford, to make one of a reading-party, under the tutorship of his friend Mr. Wellwood.

"Where do they go?"

"It is not settled. Guy wished it to be the sea-side; but Philip has been recommending a farmhouse in Stylehurst parish, rather nearer St. Mildred's Wells than Stylehurst, but quite out in the moor, and an immense way from both."

"Do you think it will be the place?"

"Yes; Guy thinks it would suit Mr. Wellwood, because he has friends at St. Mildred's, so he gave his vote for it. He expects to hear how it is settled to-day or to-morrow."

Coming out on the lawn, they found the three ladies sitting under the acacia, with their books and work. Laura did, indeed, look older than her real age, as much above twenty as Amy looked under nineteen. She was prettier than ever; her complexion exquisite in delicacy, her fine figure and the perfect outline of her features more developed; but the change from girl to woman had passed over her, and set its stamp on the anxious blue eye and almost oppressed brow. Mary thought it would be hard to define where was that difference. It was not want of bloom, for of that Laura had more than any of the others, fresh, healthy, and bright, while Amy was always rather pale, and Lady Eveleen was positively wan and faded by London and late hours; nor was it loss of animation, for Laura talked and laughed with interest and eager ness; nor was it thought, for little Amy, when at rest, wore a meditative, pensive countenance; but there was something either added or taken away, which made it appear that the serenity and carelessness of early youth had fled from her, and the air of the cares of life had come over her.

Mary told her plans,—Church service at four, followed by a tea-drinking in the fields; tea in the garden for the com pany, and play for the school children and all who liked to join them. Every one likes such festivals, which have the recommendation of permitting all to do as they please, bringing friends together in perfect ease and freedom, with an

object that raises them above the rank of mere gatherings for the pleasure of rich neighbours.

Mrs. Edmonstone gladly made the engagement, and Lady Eveleen promised to be quite well, and to teach the children all manner of new games, though she greatly despised the dulness of English children, and had many droll stories of the stupidity of Laura's pupils communicated to her, with perhaps a little exaggeration, by Charles, and still further embellished by herself, for the purpose of exciting Charlotte's indignation.

Mary proceeded to her consultation about the singing, and was conducted by Guy and Amy to the piano, and when her ears could not be indoctrinated by their best efforts, they more than half engaged to walk to East Hill, and have a conversation with the new schoolmaster, whom Mary pitied for having fallen on people so unable to appreciate his musical training as herself and her father. The whole party walked back with her as far as the shade lasted; and at the end of the next field she turned, saw them standing round the stile, thought what happy people they were, and then resumed her wonder whither Laura's youthfulness had flown.

The situation of Philip and Laura had not changed. His regiment had never been at any great distance from Hollywell, and he often came, venturing more as Laura learnt to see him with less trepidation. He seldom or never was alone with her; but his influence was as strong as ever, and look, word, gesture, which she alone could understand, told her what she was to him, and revealed his thoughts. To him she was devoted, all her doings were with a view to please him, and deserve his affection; he was her world, and sole object. Indeed, she was sometimes startled by perceiving that tenderly as she loved her own family, all were subordinate to him. She had long since known the true name of her feelings for him; she could not tell when or how the certainty had come, but she was conscious that it was love that they had acknowledged for one another, and that she only lived in the light of his love. Still she did not realize the evil of concealment, it was so deep a sensation of her innermost heart, that she never could imagine revealing it to any living creature, and she had besides so surrendered her judgment to her idol, that no thought could ever cross her that he had enjoined what was wrong. Her heart and soul were his alone,

and she left the future to him without an independent desire or reflection. All the embarrassments and discomforts which her secret occasioned her were met willingly for his sake, and these were not a few, though time had given her more self-command, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, had hardened her.

She always had a dread of *tête-à-têtes* and conversations over novels, and these were apt to be unavoidable when Eveleen was at Hollywell. The twilight wanderings on the terrace were a daily habit, and Eveleen almost always paired with her. On this evening in particular Laura was made very uncomfortable by Eveleen's declaring that it was positively impossible and unnatural that the *good* heroine of some novel should have concealed her engagement from her parents. Laura could not help saying that there might be many excuses; then afraid that she was exciting suspicion, changed the subject in great haste, and tried to make Eveleen come indoors, telling her she would tire herself to death, and vexed by her cousin's protestations that the fresh cool air did her good. Besides, Eveleen was looking with attentive eyes at another pair who were slowly walking up and down the shady walk that bordered the grass-plot, and now and then standing still to enjoy the subdued silence of the summer evening, and the few distant sounds that marked the perfect lull.

"How calm,—how beautiful!" murmured Amabel.

"It only wants the low solemn surge and ripple of the tide, and its dash on the rocks," said Guy. "If ever there was music, it is there; but it makes one think what the ear must be that can take in the whole of those harmonies."

"How I should to hear it!"

"And see it. O Amy! to show you the sunny sea,—the sense of breadth and vastness in that pale clear horizon line, and the infinite number of fields of light between you and it. —and the free feeling as you stand on some high crag, the wind blowing in your face across half the globe, and the waves dashing far below! I am growing quite thirsty for the sea."

"You know, papa said something about your taking your reading-party to Redclyffe."

"True; but I don't think Markham would like it. and it would put old Mrs. Drew into no end of a fuss."

"Not like to have you?"

"O yes, I should be all very well; but if they heard I was bringing three or four men with me, they would think them regular wild beasts. They would be in an awful fright. Besides, it is so long since I have been at home, that I don't altogether fancy going there till I settle there for good."

"Ah! it will be sad going there at first."

"And it has not been my duty yet."

"But you will be glad when you get there?"

"Shan't I? I wonder if any one has been to shoot the rabbits on the Shag rock. They must have quite overrun it by this time. But I don't like the notion of the first day. There is not only the great change, but a stranger at the vicarage."

"Do you know any thing about the new clergyman? I believe Mrs. Ashford is a connection of Lady Thorndale's?"

"Yes; Thorndale calls them pattern people, and I have no doubt they will do great good in the parish. I am sure we want some enlightenment, for we are a most primitive race, and something beyond Jenny Robinson's dame school would do us no harm."

Here Mr. Edmonstone called from the window that they must come in.

Mrs. Edmonstone thought deeply that night. She had not forgotten her notion that Eveleen was attracted by Guy's manners, and had been curious to see what would happen when Eveleen was sent to Hollywell for country air.

She had a very good opinion of Lady Eveleen. Since the former visit, she had shown more spirit of improvement, and laid aside many little follies; she had put herself under Laura's guidance, and tamed down into what gave the promise of a sensible woman, more than any thing that had hitherto been observed in her; and little addicted to match-making as Mrs. Edmonstone was, she could not help thinking that Eva was almost worthy of her dear Guy, (she never could expect to find any one she should think quite worthy of him, he was too much like one of her own children for that,) and on the other hand, how delighted Lord and Lady Kilcoran would be. It was a very pretty castle in the air; but in the midst of it, the notion suddenly darted into Mrs. Edmonstone's head, that while she was thinking of it, it was Amy, not Eveleen, who was constantly with Guy. Reading and music, roses, botany

and walks on the terrace! She looked back, and it was still the same. Last Easter vacation, how they used to study the stars in the evening, to linger in the greenhouse in the morning, nursing the geraniums, and to practise singing over the school-room piano; how, in a long walk, they always paired together; and how they seemed to share every pursuit or pleasure.

Now Mrs. Edmonstone was extremely fond of Guy, and trusted him entirely; but she thought she ought to consider how far this should be allowed. Feeling that he ought to see more of the world, she had sent him as much as she could into society, but it had only made him cling closer to home. Still he was but twenty, it was only a country neighbourhood, and there was much more for him to see before he could fairly be supposed to know his own mind. She knew he would act honourably; but she had a horror of letting him entangle himself with her daughter before he was fairly able to judge of his own feelings. Or, if this was only behaving with a brother's freedom and confidence, Mrs. Edmonstone felt it was not safe for her poor little Amy, who might learn so to depend on him as to miss him grievously when this intimacy ceased, as it must when he settled at his own home. It would be right, while it was still time, to make her remember that they were not brother and sister, and by checking their present happy, careless confidential intercourse, to save her from the chill which seemed to have been cast on Laura. Mrs. Edmonstone was the more anxious, because she deeply regretted not having been sufficiently watchful in Laura's case, and perhaps she felt an acknowledged conviction that if there was real love on Guy's part, it would not be hurt by a little reserve on Amy's. Yet to have to speak to her little innocent daughter on such a matter disturbed her so much, that she could hardly have set about it, if Amy had not, at that very moment, knocked at her door.

"My dear, what has kept you up so late?"

"We have been sitting in Eveleen's room, mamma, hearing about her London life; and then we began to settle our plans for to-morrow, and I came to ask what you think of them. You know Guy has promised to go and hear the East-hill singing, and we were proposing, if you did not mind it, to take the pony-carriage and the donkey, and go in the morning to East-hill, have luncheon, and get Mary to go with

us to the top of the great down, where we have never been. Guy has been wanting us, for a long time past, to go and see the view, and saying there is a track quite smooth enough to drive Charlie to the top."

Amy wondered at her mother's look of hesitation. In fact, the scneme was so accordant with their usual habits tnat it was impossible to find any objection; yet it all hinged on Guy, and the appointment at East-hill might lead to a great many more.

"Do you wish us to do any thing else, mamma? We don't care about it."

"No, my dear," said Mrs. Edmonstone, "I see no reason against it. But—" and she felt as if she was making a desperate plunge, "there is something I want to say to you."

Amy stood ready to hear, but Mrs. Edmonstone paused. Another effort, and she spoke:—

"Amy, my dear, I don't wish to find fault, but I thought of advising you to take care. About Guy—"

The very brilliant pink which instantly overspread Amy's face made her mother think her warning more expedient.

"You have been spending a great deal of time with him of late, very sensibly and pleasantly, I know; I don't blame you at all, my dear, so you need not look distressed. I only want you to be careful. You know, though we call him cousin, he is scarcely a relation at all."

"O mamma, don't go on," said poor little Amy, hurriedly; "indeed I am very sorry!"

For Amy understood that it was imputed to her that she had been forward and unmaidenly. Mrs. Edmonstone saw her extreme distress, and grieved at the pain she had inflicted, tried to reassure her as much as she might be safe.

"Indeed, my dear, you have done nothing amiss. I only intended to tell you to be cautious for fear you should get into a way of going on which might not look well. Don't make any great difference, I only meant that there should not be quite so much singing and gardening alone with him, or walking in the garden in the evening. You can manage to draw back a little, so as to keep more with me or with Laura, and I think that will be the best way."

Every word, no matter what, increased the burning of poor Amy's cheeks. A broad accusation of flirting would have been less distressing to many girls than this mild and

delicate warning was to one of such shrinking modesty and maidenly feeling. She had a sort of consciousness that she enjoyed partaking in his pursuits, and this made her sense of confusion and shame overwhelming. What had she been thoughtlessly doing? She could not speak, she could not look. Her mother put her arms round her, and Amy hid her head on her shoulder, and held her fast. Mrs. Edmonstone kissed and caressed the little fluttering bird, then saying, "Good-night, my own dear child," unloosed her embrace.

"Good-night, dear mamma," whispered Amy. "I am very sorry."

"You need not be sorry, my dear, only be careful. Good-night." And it would be hard to say whether the mother or the daughter had the hottest cheeks.

Poor little Amy! what was her dismay as she asked herself, again and again, what she had been doing and what she was to do? The last was plain,—she knew what was right, and do it she must. There would be an end of much that was pleasant, and a fresh glow came over her as she owned how very, very pleasant; but if it was not quite the thing,—if mamma did not approve, so it must be. True, all her doings received their zest from Guy,—her heart bounded at the very sound of his whistle, she always heard his words through all the din of a whole party,—nothing was complete without him, nothing good without his approval,—but so much the more shame for her. It was a kind of seeking him, which was of all things the most shocking. So there should be an end of it, —never mind the rest! Amy knelt down, and prayed that she might keep her resolution.

She did not know how much of her severity towards herself was learned from the example that had been two years before her. Nor did she think whether the seeking had been mutual; she imagined it all her own doing, and did not guess that she would give pain to Guy by withdrawing herself from him.

The morning gave vigour to her resolution, and when Laura came to ask what mamma thought of their project, Amy looked confused—said she did not know—she believed it would not do. But just then in came her mother, to say she had been considering of the expedition, and meant to join it herself. Amy understood, blushed, and was silently grateful.

When Laura wanted to alter her demeanour towards Guy,

being perfectly cool, and not in the least conscious, she had acted with great judgment, seen exactly what to do, and what to leave undone, so as to keep up appearances. But it was not so with Amy. She was afraid of herself, and was in extremes. She would not come down till the last moment, that there might be no talking in the window. She hardly spoke at breakfast-time, and adhered closely to Laura and Eveleen when they wandered in the garden. Presently Charles looked out from the dressing-room window, calling—

"Amy, Guy is ready to read."

"I can't come. Read without me," she answered, hoping Charlie would not be vexed, and feeling her face light up again.

The hour for the expedition came, and Amy set off walking with Laura, because Guy was with Mrs. Edmonstone; but presently, after holding open a gate for Charlotte, who was on the donkey, he came up to the sisters, and joined in the conversation. Amy saw something in the hedge—a foxglove, she believed—it would have done as well if it had been a nettle—she stopped to gather it, hoping to fall behind them, but they waited for her. She grew silent, but Guy appealed to her. She ran on to Charlotte and her donkey, but at the next gate Guy had joined company again. At last she put herself under her mother's wing, and by keeping with her did pretty well all the time she was at East Hill. But when they went on, she was riding the donkey, and it, as donkeys always are, was resolved on keeping ahead of the walkers, so that as Guy kept by her side, it was a more absolute *tête-à-tête* than ever.

At the top of the hill they found a fine view, rich and extensive, broad woods, fields waving with silvery barley, trim meadows, fair hazy blue distance, and a dim line of sea beyond. This, as Amy knew, was Guy's delight; and further, what she would not tell herself, was that he chiefly cared for showing it to her. It was so natural to call him to admire every thing beautiful, and ask if it was equal to Redclyffe, that she found herself already turning to him to participate in his pleasure, as he pointed out all that was to be seen; but she recollected, blushed, and left her mother to speak. He had much to show. There was a hanging wood on one side of the hill, whence he had brought her more than one botanical prize, and she must now visit their native haunts. It was

too great a scramble for Mrs. Edmonstone, with all her good will; Eveleen was to be kept still, and not to tire herself; Laura did not care for botany, nor love brambles; and Amy was obliged to stand and look into the wood, saying, "No, thank you, I don't think I can," and then run back to Mary and Charles; while Charlotte was loudly calling out that it was delightful fun, and that she was very stupid. In another minute Guy had overtaken her, and in his gentle, persuasive voice, was telling her it was very easy, and she must come and see the bird's-nest orchises. She would have liked it above all things, but she thought it very kind of Guy not to seem angry when she said, "No, thank you."

Mary, after what she had seen yesterday, could not guess at the real reason, or she would have come with her; but she thought Amy was tired, and would rather not. Poor Amy was tired, very tired, before the walk was over, but her weary looks made it worse, for Guy offered her his arm. "No, thank you," she said, "I am getting on very well;" and she trudged on resolutely, for her mother was in the carriage, and to lag behind the others would surely make him keep with her.

Mrs. Edmonstone was very sorry for her fatigue, but Amy found it a good excuse for not wandering in the garden, or joining in the music. It had been a very uncomfortable day; she hoped she had done right; at any rate, she had the peaceful conviction of having tried to do so.

The next day, Amy was steady to her resolution. No reading with the two youths, though Charles scolded her; sitting in her room till Guy was gone out, going indoors as soon as she heard him return, and in the evening staying with Charles when her sisters and cousins went out; but this did not answer, for Guy came and sat by them. She moved away as soon as possible, though very unwillingly; but the more inclined she was to linger, the more she thought she ought to go; so, murmuring something about looking for Laura, she threw on her scarf, and sprung to the window. Her muslin caught on the bolt, she turned, Guy was already disentangling it, and she met his eye. It was full of anxious, pleading inquiry, which to her seemed upbraiding, and, not knowing what to do, she exclaimed, hurriedly, "Thank you; no harm done!" and darted into the garden, frightened to feel her face glowing and her heart throbbing. She could

not help looking back to see if he was following. No, he was not attempting it; he was leaning against the window, and on she hastened, the perception dawning on her that she was hurting him; he might think her rude, unkind, capricious, he who had always been so kind to her, and when he was going away so soon. "But it is right; it must be done," said little Amy to herself, standing still, now that she was out of sight. "If I was wrong before, I must bear it now, and he will see the rights of it sooner or later. The worst of all would be my not doing the very *most right* to please any body. Besides, he can't really care for missing silly little Amy when he has mamma and Charlie. And he is going away, so it will be easier to begin right when he comes back. Be that as it may, it must be done. I'll get Charlie to tell me what he was saying about the painted glass."

CHAPTER XIII.

Oh, thou child of many prayers
Life hath quicksands—life hath snares!
Care and age come unawares.

Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

LONGFELLOW.

"WHAT is the matter with Amy? What makes her so odd?" asked Charles, as his mother came to wish him good-night.

"Poor little dear! don't take any notice," was all the answer he received; and seeing that he was to be told no more, he held his peace.

Laura understood without being told. She, too, had thought Guy and Amy were a great deal together, and combining various observations, she perceived that her mother must have given Amy a caution. She therefore set herself, like a good sister, to shelter Amy as much as she could, save her from awkward situations, and, above all, to prevent her altered manner from being remarked. This was the less difficult, as Eveleen was subdued and languid, and more inclined to lie on the sofa and read, than to look out for mirth.

As to poor little Amy, her task was in one way become less hard, for Guy had ceased to haunt her, and seemed to make it his business to avoid all that could cause her embarrassment; but in another way it hurt her much more, for she now saw the pain she was causing. If obliged to do any thing for her, he would give a look as if to ask pardon, and then her rebellious heart would so throb with joy as to cause her dismay at having let herself fall into so hateful a habit as

wishing to attract attention. What a struggle it was not to obey the impulse of turning to him for the smile with which he would greet any thing in conversation that interested them both, and how wrong she thought it not to be more consoled when she saw him talking to Eveleen, or to any of the others, as if he was doing very well without her. This did not often happen; he was evidently out of spirits, and thoughtful, and Amy was afraid some storm might be gathering respecting Mr. Sebastian Dixon, about whom there always seemed to be some uncomfortable mystery.

Mrs. Edmonstone saw every thing, and said nothing. She was very sorry for them both, but she could not interfere, and could only hope she had done right, and protected Amy as far as she was able. She was vexed now and then to see Eveleen give knowing smiles and significant glances, feared that she guessed what was going on, and wondered whether to give her a hint not to add to Amy's confusion; but her great dislike to enter on such a subject prevailed, and she left things to take their course, thinking that, for once, Guy's departure would be a relief.

The approach of any thing in the shape of a party of pleasure was one of the best cures for Eveleen's ailments, and the evening before Mary's tea-drinking, she was in high spirits, laughing and talking a great deal, and addressing herself chiefly to Guy. He exerted himself to answer, but it did not come with life and spirit, his countenance did not light up, and at last Eveleen said, "Ah! I see I am a dreadful bore. I'll go away, and leave you to repose."

"Lady Eveleen!" he exclaimed, in consternation; "what have I been doing—what have I been thinking of?"

"Nay, that is best known to yourself, though I think perhaps I could divine," said she, with that archness and grace that always seemed to remove the unfavourable impression that her proceedings might have given. "Shall I?"

"No, no," he answered, colouring crimson, and then trying to laugh off his confusion, and find some answer, but without success; and Eveleen, perceiving her aunt's eyes were upon her, suddenly recollected that she had gone quite as far as decorum allowed, and made as masterly a retreat as the circumstances permitted.

"Well, I have always thought a 'penny for your thoughts' the boldest offer in the world, and now it is proved."

This scene made Mrs. Edmonstone doubly annoyed, the next morning, at waking with a disabling headache, which made it quite impossible for her to attempt going to Mary Ross's *fête*. With great sincerity, Amy entreated to be allowed to remain at home, but she thought it would only be making the change more remarkable; she did not wish Mary to be disappointed; among so many ladies, Amy could easily avoid getting into difficulties; while Laura would, she trusted, be able to keep Eveleen in order.

The day was sunny, and all went off to admiration. The gentlemen presided over the cricket, and the ladies over "blind-man's buff" and "thread my needle;" but perhaps Mary was a little disappointed that, though she had Sir Guy's bodily presence, the peculiar blitheness and animation which he usually shed around him were missing. He sung at church, he filled tiny cups from huge pitchers of tea, he picked up and pacified a screaming child that had tumbled off a gate —he was as good-natured and useful as possible, but he was not his joyous and brilliant self.

Amy devoted herself to the smallest fry, played assiduously for three quarters of an hour with a fat, grave boy of three, who stood about a yard-and-a-half from her, solemnly throwing a ball into her lap, and never catching it again, took charge of many caps and bonnets, and walked about with Louisa Harper, a companion whom no one envied her.

In conclusion, the sky clouded over, it became chilly, and a shower began to fall. Laura pursued Eveleen, and Amy hunted up Charlotte from the utmost parts of the field, where she was the very centre of "winding up the clock," and, sorely against her will, dragged her off the wet grass. About sixty yards from the house, Guy met them with an umbrella, which, without speaking, he gave to Charlotte. Amy said, "Thank you," and again came that look. Charlotte rattled on, and hung back to talk to Guy, so that Amy could not hasten on without leaving her shelterless. It may be believed that she had the conversation to herself. At the door they met Mary and her father, going to dismiss their flock, who had taken refuge in a cart-shed at the other end of the field. Guy asked if he could be of any use; Mr. Ross said no; and Mary begged Amy and Charlotte to go up to her room, and change their wet shoes.

There, Amy would fain have stayed, flushed and agitated,

as those looks made her; but Charlotte was in wild spirits, delighted at having been caught in the rain, and obliged to wear shoes a mile too large, and eager to go and share the fun in the drawing-room. There, in the twilight, they found a mass of young ladies herded together, making a confused sound of laughter and giggling, while, at the other end of the room, Amy could just see Guy sitting alone in a dark corner.

Charlotte's tongue was soon the loudest in the medley, to which Amy did not at first attend, till she heard Charlotte saying,—

"Ah! you should hear Guy sing that."

"What?" she whispered, to Eveleen.

"'The Land of the Leal,'" was the answer.

"I wish he would sing it now," said Ellen Harper.

"This darkness would be just the time for music," said Eveleen; "it is quite a witching time."

"Why don't you ask him?" said Ellen. "Come, Charlotte, there's a good girl, go and ask him."

"Shall I?" said Charlotte, whispering and giggling with an affectation of shyness.

"No, no, Charlotte," said Laura.

"No! why not?" said Eveleen. "Don't be afraid, Charlotte."

"He is so grave," said Charlotte.

Eveleen had been growing wilder and less guarded all day, and now, partly liking to tease and surprise the others, and partly emboldened by the darkness, she answered,—

"It will do him all manner of good. Here, Charlotte, I'll tell you how to make him. Tell him Amy wants him to do it."

"Ay! tell him so," cried Ellen, and they laughed in a manner that overpowered Amy with horror and shyness. She sprung to seize Charlotte, and stop her; she could not speak, but Louisa Harper caught her arm, and Laura's grave orders were drowned in a universal titter, and suppressed exclamation,—"Go, Charlotte, go; we will never forgive you if you don't!"

"Stop!" Amy struggled to cry, breaking from Louisa, and springing up in a sort of agony. Guy, who had such a horror of singing any thing, deep in pathos or religious feeling, to mixed or unfit auditors, asked to do so in her name!

"Stop! oh, Charlotte!" It was too late; Charlotte, thoughtless with merriment, amused at vexing Laura, set up with applause, and confident in Guy's good nature, had come to him, and was saying,—"Oh Guy! Amy wants you to come and sing us the 'Land of the Leal.'"

Amy saw him start up. What did he think of her? Oh, what? He stepped towards them. The silly girls cowered as if they had roused a lion. His voice was not loud—it was almost as gentle as usual; but it quivered, as if it was hard to keep it so, and, as well as she could see, his face was rigid and stern as iron. "Did you wish it?" he said, addressing himself to her, as if she were the only person present.

Her breath was almost gone. "Oh! I beg your pardon," she faltered. She could not exculpate herself; she saw it looked like an idle, almost an indecorous trick, unkind, every thing abhorrent to her and to him, especially in the present state of things. His eyes were on her, his head bent towards her; he waited for an answer. "I beg your pardon," was all she could say.

There was—yes, there was—one of those fearful flashes of his kindling eye. She felt as if she was shrinking to nothing; she heard him say, in a low, hoarse tone, "I am afraid I cannot;" then Mr. Ross, Mary, lights came in; there was a bustle and confusion, and when next she was clearly conscious, Laura was ordering the carriage.

When it came, there was an inquiry for Sir Guy.

"He is gone home," said Mr. Ross. "I met him in the passage, and wished him good-night."

Mr. Ross did not add what he afterwards told his daughter, that Guy seemed not to know whether it was raining or not; that he had put an umbrella into his hand, and seen him march off at full speed, through the pouring rain, with it under his arm.

The ladies entered the carriage. Amy leant back in her corner; Laura forbore to scold either Eveleen or Charlotte till she could have them separately; Eveleen was silent, because she was dismayed at the effect she had produced, and Charlotte, because she knew there was a scolding impending over her.

They found no one in the drawing-room but Mr. Edmonstone and Charles, who said they had heard the door open, and Guy run up-stairs, but they supposed he was wet through,

as he had not made his appearance. It was very inhospitable in the girls not to have made room for him in the carriage.

Amy went to see how her mother was, longing to tell her whole trouble, but found her asleep, and was obliged to leave it till the morrow. Poor child, she slept very little, but she would not go to her mother before breakfast, lest she should provoke the headache into staying another day. Guy was going by the train at twelve o'clock, and she was resolved that something should be done; so, as soon as her father had wished Guy good-bye, and ridden off to his justice meeting, she entreated her mother to come into the dressing-room, and hear what she had to say.

"Oh, mamma! the most dreadful thing has happened!" and, hiding her face, she told her story, ending with a burst of weeping as she said how Guy was displeased. "And well he might be! That after all that has vexed him this week, I should tease him with such a trick. Oh, mamma! what must he think?"

"My dear, there was a great deal of silliness; but you need not treat it as if it was so very shocking."

"Oh, but it hurt him! He was angry, and now I know how it is, he is angry with himself for being angry. Oh, how foolish I have been! What shall I do?"

"Perhaps we can let him know it was not your fault," said Mrs. Edmonstone, thinking it might be very salutary for Charlotte to send her to confess.

"Do you think so?" cried Amy, eagerly. "Oh! that would make it all comfortable. Only it was partly mine, for not keeping Charlotte in better order, and we must not throw it all on her and Eveleen. You think we may tell him?"

"I think he ought not to be allowed to fancy you let your name be so used."

A message came for Mrs. Edmonstone, and while she was attending to it, Amy hastened away, fully believing that her mother had authorized her to go and explain it to Guy, and ask his pardon. It was what she thought the natural thing to do, and she was soon by his side, as she saw him pacing, with folded arms, under the wall.

Much had lately been passing in Guy's mind. He had gone on floating on the sunny stream of life at Hollywell, too happy to observe its especial charm, till the change in Amy's manner cast a sudden gloom over all. Not till then did he

understand his own feelings, and recognise in her the being he had dreamt of. Amy was what made Hollywell precious to him. Sternly as he was wont to treat his impulses, he did not look on his affection as an earthborn fancy, liable to draw him from higher things, and, therefore, to be combated; he deemed her rather a guide and guard, whose love might arm him, soothe him, and encourage him. Yet he had little hope, for he did not do justice to his powers of inspiring affection; no one could distrust his temper and his character as much as he did himself, and with his ancestry and the doom he believed attached to his race, with his own youth and untried principles, with his undesirable connections, and the reserve he was obliged to exercise regarding them, he considered himself as objectionable a person, as could well be found, as yet untouched by any positive crime, and he respected the Edmonstones too much to suppose that these disadvantages could be counterbalanced for a moment by his position; indeed, he interpreted Amy's coolness by supposing that there was a desire to discourage his attentions. No poor tutor or penniless cousin ever felt he was doing a more desperate thing in confessing an attachment, than did Sir Guy Morville when he determined that all should be told, at the risk of losing her for ever, and closing against himself the doors of his happy home. It was not right and fair by her parents, he thought, so to regard their daughter, and live in the same house with his sentiments unavowed, and as to Amy herself, if his feelings had reached such a pitch of sensitiveness that he must needs behave like an angry lion, because her name had been dragged into an idle joke, it was high time it should be explained, unpropitious as the moment might be for declaring his attachment, when he had manifested such a temper as any woman might dread. Thus he made up his mind that, come of it what might, he would not leave Hollywell that day till the truth was told. Just as he was turning to find Mrs. Edmonstone and "put his fate to the touch," a little figure stood beside him, and Amy's own sweet, low tones were saying, imploringly,—

"Guy, I wanted to tell you how sorry I am you were so teased last night."

"Don't think of it!" said he, taken extremely by surprise.

"It was our fault, I could not stop it; I should have kept

Charlotte in better order, but they would not let her hear me I knew it was what you dislike particularly, and I was very sorry."

"You—I was—I was. But no matter now. Amy," he added, earnestly, "may I ask you to walk on with me a little way. I must say something to you."

Was this what "mamma" objected to? Oh no! Amy felt she must stay now, and, in truth, she was glad it was right, though her heart beat fast, fast, faster, as Guy, pulling down a long, trailing branch of Noisette rose, and twisting it in his hand, paused for a few moments, then spoke collectedly, and without hesitation, though with the tremulousness of subdued agitation, looking the while not at her, but straight before him.

"You ought to be told why your words and looks have such effect on me as to make me behave as I did last night. Shame on me for such conduct! I know its evil, and how preposterous it must make what I have to tell you. I don't know how long it has been, but almost ever since I came here, a feeling has been growing up in me towards you, such as I can never have for any one else."

The flame rushed into Amy's cheeks, and no one could have told what she felt, as he paused again, and then went on speaking more quickly, as if his emotion were less under control.

"If ever there is to be happiness for me on earth, it must be through you; as you, for the last three years, have been all my brightness here. What I feel for you is beyond all power of telling you, Amy! But I know full well all there is against me—I know I am untried, and how can I dare to ask one born to brightness and happiness to share the doom of my family?"

Amy's impulse was that any thing shared with him would be welcome; but the strength of the feeling stifled the power of expression, and she could not utter a word.

"It seems selfish even to dream of it," he proceeded; "yet I must,—I cannot help it. To feel that I had your love to keep me safe, to know that you watched for me, prayed for me, were my own, my Verena—oh Amy! it would be more joy than I have ever dared to hope for. But mind," he added, after another brief pause, "I would not even ask you to answer me now, far less to bind yourself, even if—if it

were possible. I know my trial is not come; and were I to render myself, by positive act, unworthy even to think of you, it would be too dreadful to have entangled you, and made you unhappy. No. I speak now, because I ought not to remain here with such feelings unknown to your father and mother."

"At that moment, close on the other side of the box-tree clump, were heard the wheels of Charles's garden-chair, and Charlotte's voice talking to him, as he made his morning tour round the garden. Amy flew off, like a little bird to its nest, and never stopped, till, breathless and crimson, she darted into the dressing-room, threw herself on her knees, and with her face hidden in her mother's lap, exclaimed, in panting, half-smothered whispers, which needed all Mrs. Edmonstone's intuition to make them intelligible,—

"O mamma, mamma, he says—he says he loves me!"

Perhaps Mrs. Edmonstone was not so very much surprised; but she had no time to do more than raise and kiss the burning face, and see, at a moment's glance, how bright was the gleam of frightened joy in the downcast eye and troubled smile; when two knocks, given rapidly, were heard, and almost at the same moment the door opened, and Guy stood before her, his face no less glowing than that which Amy buried again on her mother's knee.

"Come in, Guy," said Mrs. Edmonstone, as he stood doubtful for a moment at the door, and there was a sweet smile of proud, joyful affection on her face, conveying even more encouragement than her tone. Amy raised her head, and moved as if to leave the room.

"Don't go," he said, earnestly, "unless you wish it."

Amy did not wish it, especially now that she had her mother to save her confusion, and she sat on a footstool, holding her mother's hand, looking up to Guy whenever she felt bold enough, and hanging down her head when he said what showed how much more highly he prized her than silly little Amy could deserve.

"You know what I am come to say," he began, standing by the mantel-shelf, as was his wont in his conferences with Mrs. Edmonstone, and he repeated the same in substance as he had said to Amy in the garden, though with less calmness and coherence, and far more warmth of expression, as if, now

that she was protected by her mother's presence, he exercised less force in self-restraint.

Never was any one happier than was Mrs. Edmonstone loving Guy so heartily, seeing the beauty of his character in each word, rejoicing that such affection should be bestowed on her little Amy, exulting in her having won such a heart, and touched and gratified by the free confidence with which both had at once hastened to pour out all to her, not merely as a duty, but in the full ebullition of their warm young love. The only difficulty was to bring herself to speak with prudence becoming her position, whilst she was sympathizing with them as ardently as if she was not older than both of them put together. When Guy spoke of himself as unproved and undeserving of trust, it was all she could do to keep from declaring there was no one whom she thought so safe.

"While you go on as you have begun, Guy."

"If you tell me to hope! Oh, Mrs. Edmonstone! is it wrong that an earthly incentive to persevere should have power which sometimes seems greater than the true one?"

"There is the best and strongest ground of all for trusting you," said she. "If you spoke of keeping right only for Amy's sake, then I might fear; but when she is second, there is confidence indeed."

"If speaking were all!" said Guy.

"There is one thing I ought to say," she proceeded; "you know you are very young, and though—though I don't know that I can say so in my own person, a prudent woman would say, that you have seen so little of the world, that you may easily meet a person you would like better than such a quiet little dull thing as your guardian's daughter."

The look that he cast on Amy was worth seeing, and then, with a smile, he answered,—

"I am glad you don't say it in your own person."

"It is very bold and presumptuous in me to say any thing at all in papa's absence," said Mrs. Edmonstone, smiling; "but I am sure he will think in the same way, that things ought to remain as they are, and that it is our duty not to allow you to be, or to feel, otherwise than entirely at liberty.'

"I dare say it may be right in you," said Guy, grudgingly. "However, I must not complain. It is too much that you should not reject me altogether."

To all three that space was as bright a gleam of sunshine

as ever embellished life, so short as to be free from a single care, a perfectly serenely happy present, the more joyous from having been preceded by vexations, each of the two young things learning that there was love where it was most precious. Guy especially, isolated and lonely as he stood in life, with his fear and mistrust of himself, was now not only allowed to love, and assured beyond his hopes that Amy returned his affection, but found himself thus welcomed by her mother, and gathered into the family where his warm feelings had taken up their abode, while he believed himself regarded only as a guest and a stranger.

They talked on, with happy silences between, Guy standing all the time with his branch of roses in his hand, and Amy looking up to him, and trying to realize it, and to understand why she was so very, very happy.

No one thought of time till Charlotte rushed in, like a whirlwind, crying,—

"Oh, here you are! We could not think what had become of you. There has Deloraine been at the door these ten minutes, and Charlie sent me to find you, for he says if you are too late for Mrs. Henley's dinner, she will write such an account of you to Philip as you will never get over."

Very little of this was heard, there was only the instinctive consternation of being too late. They started up, Guy threw down his roses, caught Amy's hand, and pressed it, while she bent down her head, hiding the renewed blush; he dashed out of the room, and up to his own, while Mrs. Edmonstone and Charlotte hurried down. In another second, he was back again, and once more Amy felt the pressure of his hand on hers,—

"Good-bye!" he said, and she whispered another "Good-bye!" the only words she had spoken.

One moment more he lingered,—

"My Verena!" said he; but the hurrying sounds in the hall warned him,—he sprang down to the drawing-room. Even Charles was on the alert, standing, leaning against the table, and looking eager; but Guy had not time to let him speak, he only shook hands, and wished good-bye, with a sort of vehement agitated cordiality, concealed by his haste.

"Where's Amy?" cried Charlotte. "Amy! Is not she coming to wish him good-bye?"

He said something, of which "up-stairs" was the only

audible word; held Mrs. Edmonstone's hand fast, while she said in a low voice,—"You shall hear from papa to-morrow," then sprang on his horse, and looked up. Amy was at the window, he saw her head bending forward, under its veil of curls, in the midst of the roses round the lattice; their eyes met once more, he gave one beamy smile, then rode off at full speed, with Bustle racing after him, while Amy threw herself on her knees by her bed, and with hands clasped over her face, prayed that she might be thankful enough, and never be unworthy of him.

Every one wanted to get rid of every one else except Mrs. Edmonstone; for all but Charlotte guessed at the state of the case, and even she perceived that something was going on. Lady Eveleen was in a state of great curiosity; but she had mercy, she knew that they must tell each other before it came to her turn, and very good naturedly she invited Charlotte to come into the garden with her, and kept her out of the way by a full account of her last fancy ball, given with so much spirit and humour that Charlotte could not help attending.

Charles and Laura gained little by this kind manœuvre, for their mother was gone up again to Amy, and they could only make a few conjectures. Charles nursed his right hand, and asked Laura how hers felt? She looked up from her work, to which she had begun to apply herself diligently, and gazed at him inquiringly, as if to see whether he intended any thing.

"For my part," he added, "I certainly thought he meant to carry off the hands of some of the family."

"I suppose we shall soon hear it explained," said Laura, quietly.

"Soon! If I had as many available legs as you, would I wait for other people's soon?"

"I should think she had rather be left to mamma," said Laura, going on with her work.

"Then you do think there is something in it?" said Charles, peering up in her face; but he saw he was teasing her, recollected that she had long seemed out of spirits, and forbore to say any more. He was, however, too impatient to remain longer quiet, and presently Laura saw him adjusting his crutches.

"O Charlie! I am sure it will only be troublesome."

"I am going to my own room," said Charles, hopping off. "I presume you don't wish to forbid that."

His room had a door into the dressing-room, so that it was an excellent place for discovering all from which they did not wish to exclude him, and he did not believe he should be unwelcome; for though he might pretend it was all fun and curiosity, he heartily loved his little Amy.

The tap of his crutches, and the slow motion with which he raised himself from step to step, was heard; and Amy, who was leaning against her mother, started up, exclaiming,—

"O mamma, here comes Charlie! May I tell him? I am sure I can't meet him without."

"I suspect he has guessed it already," said Mrs. Edmonstone, going to open the door, just as he reached the head of the stairs, and then leaving them.

"Well, Amy," said he, looking full at her carnation cheeks, "are you prepared to see me turn lead-coloured, and fall into convulsions, like the sister with the spine complaint?"

"O Charlie! You know it. But how?"

Amy was helping him to the sofa, laid him down, and sat by him on the old footstool; he put his arm round her neck, and she rested her head on his shoulder.

"Well, Amy, I give you joy, my small woman," said he, talking the more nonsense because of the fulness in his throat; "and I hope you give me credit for amazing self-denial in so doing."

"O Charlie,—dear Charlie!" and she kissed him, she could not blush more, poor little thing, for she had already reached her utmost capability of redness,—"it is no such thing."

"No such thing! What has turned you into a turkey-cock all at once, or what made him nearly squeeze off my unfortunate fingers? No such thing, indeed!"

"I mean—I mean, it is not *that*. We are so very young, and I am so silly."

"Is that his reason?"

"You must make me so much better and wiser! Oh, if I could but be good enough!"

"For that matter, I don't think any one else would be

good enough to take care of such a silly little thing. But what is the *that*, that it is, or is not?"

"Nothing now, only when we are older. At least, you know papa has not heard it."

"Provided my father gives his consent, as the Irish young lady added to all her responses through the marriage service. But tell me all—all you like, I mean,—for you will have lovers' secrets now, Amy."

Mrs. Edmonstone had, meantime, gone down to Laura. Poor Laura, as soon as her brother had left the room, she allowed the fixed composure of her face to relax into a restless, harassed, almost miserable expression, and walked up and down with agitated steps.

"O wealth, wealth!"—her lips formed the words, without uttering them—"what cruel differences it makes! All smooth here! Young, not to be trusted, with strange reserves, discreditable connections,—that family,—that fearful temper, showing itself even to her! All will be overlooked! Papa will be delighted, I know he will! And how is it with us? Proved, noble, superior, owned as such by all, as Philip is, yet for that want of hateful money, he would be spurned. And for this—for this—the love that has grown up with our lives must be crushed down and hidden—our life is wearing out in wearying self-watching!"

The lock of the door turned, and Laura had resumed her ordinary expression before it opened, and her mother came in; but there was any thing but calmness beneath, for the pang of self-reproach had come,—"Was it thus that she prepared to hear these tidings of her sister?"

"Well, Laura," began Mrs. Edmonstone, with the eager smile of one bringing delightful news, and sure of sympathy.

"It is so then?" said Laura. "Dear, dear little Amy! I hope"—and her eyes filled with tears; but she had learnt to dread any outbreak of feeling, conquered it in a minute, and said,—

"What has happened? How does it stand?"

"It stands, at least as far as I can say without papa, as the dear Guy very rightly and wisely wished it to stand. There is no positive engagement, they are both too young; but he thought it was not right to remain here without letting us know his sentiments towards her."

A pang shot through Laura; but it was but for a moment

Guy might doubt where Philip need never do so. Her mother went on,—

"Their frankness and confidence are most beautiful. We know dear little Amy could not help it; but there was something very sweet, very noble, in his way of telling all."

Another pang for Laura. But no! it was only poverty that was to blame. Philip would speak as plainly if his prospects were as fair.

"Oh, I hope it will do well," said she.

"It must,—it will!" cried Mrs. Edmonstone, giving way to her joyful enthusiasm of affection. "It is nonsense to doubt, knowing him as we do. There is not a man in the world with whom I could be so happy to trust her."

Laura could not hear Guy set above all men in the world, and she remembered Philip's warning to her, two years ago.

"There is much that is very good and very delightful about him," she said hesitatingly.

"You are thinking of the Morville temper," said her mother; "but I am not afraid of it. A naturally hot temper controlled like his by strong religious principle, is far safer than a cool easy one, without the principle."

Laura thought this going too far; but she felt some compensation due to Guy, and acknowledged how strongly he was actuated by principle. However—and it was well for her—they could not talk long, for Eveleen and Charlotte were approaching, and she hastily asked what was to be done about telling Eva, who could not fail to guess something.

"We must tell her, and make her promise absolute secrecy," said Mrs. Edmonstone. "I will speak to her myself; but I must wait till I have seen papa. There is no doubt of what he will say; but we have been taking quite liberties enough in his absence."

Laura did not see her sister till luncheon, when Amy came down, with a glow on her cheeks that made her so much prettier than usual, that Charles wished Guy could have seen her. She said little, and ran up again as soon as she could. Laura followed her; and the two sisters threw their arms fondly round each other, and kissed repeatedly.

"Mamma has told you?" said Amy. "Oh, it has made me so very happy; and every one is so kind."

"Dear, dear Amy!"

"I'm only afraid——"

"He has begun so well——"

"Oh, nonsense! You cannot think I could be so foolish as to be afraid for him? Oh, no! But if he should take me for more than I am worth. O Laura, Laura! What shall I do to be as good and sensible as you? I must not be silly little Amy any more."

"Perhaps he likes you best as you are?"

"I don't mean cleverness; I can't help that,—and he knows how stupid I am,—but I am afraid he thinks there is more worth in me. Don't you know, he has a sort of sunshine in his eyes and mind, that makes all he cares about seem to him brighter and better than it really is. I am afraid he is only dressing me up with that sunshine."

"It must be strange sunshine that you want to make you better and brighter than you are," said Laura, kissing her.

"I'll tell you what it is," said Amy, folding her hands, and standing with her face raised, "it won't do now, as you told me once, to have no bones in my character. I must learn to be steady and strong, if I can; for if this is to be, he will depend on me, I don't mean, to advise him, for he knows better than any body; but to be—you know what—if vexation or trouble was to come! And Laura, think if he was to depend on me, and I was to fail! Oh, do help me to have firmness and self-command, like you!"

"It was a long time ago that we talked of your wanting bones."

"Yes, before he came; but I never forget it."

Laura was obliged to go out with Eveleen. All went their different ways; and Amy had the garden to herself to cool her cheeks in. But this was a vain operation, for a fresh access of burning was brought on while Laura was helping her to dress for dinner, when her father's quick steps sounded in the passage. He knocked at her door, and as she opened it, he kissed her on each cheek; and, throwing his arms round her, exclaimed,—

"Well, Miss Amy, you have made a fine morning's work of it! A pretty thing, for young ladies to be accepting offers while papa is out of the way. Eh, Laura?"

Amy knew that this was a manifestation of extreme delight; but it was not very pleasant to Laura.

"So you have made a conquest!" proceeded Mr. Edmonstone; "and I heartily wish you joy of it, my dear. He is as amiable and good-natured a youth as I would wish to see; and I should say the same if he had not a shilling in the world."

Laura's heart bounded; but she knew, whatever her father might fancy, the reality would be very different if Guy were as poor as Philip.

"I shall write to him this very evening," he continued, "and tell him, if he has the bad taste to like such a silly little white thing, I am not the man to stand in his way. Eh, Amy? Shall I tell him so?"

"Tell him what you please, dear papa."

"Eh? What I please? Suppose I say we can't spare our little one, and he may go about his business?"

"I'm not afraid of you, papa."

"Come, she's a good little thing,—sha'n't be teased. Eh, Laura, what do you think of it, our beauty, to see your younger sister impertinent enough to set up a lover, while your pink cheeks are left in the lurch!"

Laura not being wont to make playful repartees, her silence passed unnoticed. Her feelings were mixed; but perhaps the predominant one was satisfaction that it was not for her pink cheeks that she was valued.

It had occurred to Mrs. Edmonstone that it was a curious thing, after her attempt at scheming for Eveleen, to have to announce to her that Guy was attached to her own daughter; nay, after the willingness Eveleen had manifested to be gratified with any attention Guy showed her, it seemed doubtful for a moment whether the intelligence would be pleasing to her. However, Eveleen was just the girl to like men better than women, and never to be so happy as when on the verge of flirting; it would probably have been the same with any other youth that came in her way; and Guy might fully be acquitted of doing more than paying her the civilities which were requisite from him to any young lady visitor. He had, two years ago, when a mere boy, idled, laughed, and made fun with her; but his fear of trifling away his time had made him draw back, before he had involved himself in what might have led to any thing further; and during the present visit, no one could doubt that he was pre-occupied with Amy. At any rate, it was right that Eveleen should know the truth, in

confidence, if only to prevent her from talking of any surmises she might have.

Mrs. Edmonstone was set at ease in a moment. Eveleen was enchanted, danced round and round the room, declared they would be the most charming couple in the world; she had seen it all along; she was so delighted they had come to an understanding at last, poor things, they were so miserable all last week; and she must take credit to herself for having done it all. Was not her aunt very much obliged to her?

"My dear Eva!" exclaimed Mrs. Edmonstone, into whose mind the notion never entered that any one could boast of such a proceeding as hers last night; but the truth was, that Eveleen, feeling slightly culpable, was delighted that all had turned out so well, and resolved to carry it off with a high hand.

"To be sure! Poor little Amy! when she looked ready to sink into the earth, she little knew her obligations to me! Was not it the cleverest thing in the world? It was just the touch they wanted—the very thing!"

"My dear, I am glad I know that you are sometimes given to talking nonsense," said Mrs. Edmonstone, laughing.

"And you won't believe me serious? You won't be grateful to me for my lucky hit?" said Eveleen, looking comically injured. "Oh, auntie, that is very hard, when I shall believe to my dying day that I did it!"

"Why, Eva, if I thought it had been done by design, I should find it very hard to forgive you for it at all, rather hard even to accept Guy, so you had better not try to disturb my belief that it was only that spirit of mischief that makes you now and then a little mad."

"Oh dear! what a desperate scolding you must have given poor little Charlotte!" exclaimed Eveleen, quaintly.

Mrs. Edmonstone could not help laughing as she confessed that she had altogether forgotten Charlotte.

"Then you will. You'll go on forgetting her," cried Eveleen. "She only did what she was told, and did not know the malice of it. There, you're relenting! There's a good aunt! And now, if you won't be grateful, as any other mamma in the world would have been, and as I calculated on when I pretended to have been a prudent, designing woman

instead of a wild, mischievous monkey, at least you'll forgive me enough to invite me to the wedding. Oh! what a beauty of a wedding it will be! I'd come from Kilcoran all the way on my bare knees to see it. And you'll let me be bridesmaid, and have a ball after it?"

"There is no saying what I may do, if you'll only be a good girl, and hold your tongue. I don't want to prevent your telling any thing to your mamma, of course, but pray don't let it go any further. Don't let Maurice hear it. I have especial reasons for wishing it should not be known. You know, it is not even an engagement, and nothing must be done which can make Guy feel in the least bound."

Eveleen promised, and Mrs. Edmonstone knew that she had sense and proper feeling enough for her promise to deserve trust.

CHAPTER XIV.

For falsehood now doth flow,
And subject faith doth ebbe,
Which would not be, if reason ruled,
Or wisdome wev'd the webbe.

The daughter of debate,
That eke discord doth sowe,
Shal reape no gaine where former rule
Hath taught stil peace to growe.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

"ATHENÆUM TERRACE, St. MILDRED'S,
August 4th.

"MY DEAR PHILIP,—Thank you for returning the books, which were brought safely by Sir Guy. I am sorry you do not agree in my estimate of them. I should have thought your strong sense would have made you perceive that reasoning upon fact, and granting nothing without tangible proof, was the best remedy for a dreamy, romantic tendency to the weakness and credulity which are in the present day termed poetry and faith. It is curious to observe how these vague theories reduce themselves to the absurd when brought into practice. There are two Miss Wellwoods here, daughters of that unfortunate man who fell in a duel with old Sir Guy Morville, who seemed to make it their business to become the general subject of animadversion, taking pauper children into their house, where they educate them in a way to unfit them for their station, and teach them to observe a sort of monastic rule, preaching the poor people in the hospital to death, visiting the poor at all sorts of strange hours. Dr. Henley actually foundone of them, at twelve o'clock at night, in a miserable lodging-house, filled with the worst description of inmates. Quite young women, too, and with no mother

or elder person to direct them; but it is the fashion among the attendants at the new chapel to admire them. This subject has diverted me from what I intended to say with respect to the young baronet. Your description agrees with all I have hitherto seen, though I expected a Redclyffe Morville to have more of the *héros de roman*, or rather, of the grand tragic cast of figure, as, if I remember right, was the case with this youth's father, a much finer and handsomer young man. Sir Guy is certainly gentlemanlike, and has that sort of agreeability which depends on high animal spirits. I should think him clever, but superficial, but with his mania for music, he can hardly fail to be merely an accomplished man. In spite of all you said of the Redclyffe temper, I was hardly prepared to find it so ready to flash forth on the most inexplicable provocations. It is like walking on a volcano. I have seen him two or three times draw himself up, bite his lip, and answer with an effort and sharpness that shows how thin a crust covers the burning lava; but I acknowledge that he has been very civil and attentive, and speaks most properly of what he owes to you. I only hope he will not be hurt by the possession of so large a property so early in life, and I have an idea that our good aunt at Holywell has done a good deal to raise his opinion of himself. We shall, of course, show him every civility in our power, and give him the advantage of intellectual society at our house. His letters are directed to this place, as you know South Moor Farm is out of the cognizance of the post. They seem to keep up a brisk correspondence with him from Holywell. Few guardian's letters are, I should guess, honoured with such deepening colour as his while reading one from my uncle. He tells me he has been calling at Stylehurst; it is a pity, for his sake, that Colonel Harewood is at home, for the society of those sons is by no means advisable for him. I can hardly expect to offer him what is likely to be as agreeable to him as the conversation and amusements of Edward and Tom Harewood, who are sure to be at home for the St. Mildred's races. I hear Tom has been getting into fresh scrapes at Cambridge.

"Your affectionate sister,

"MARGARET HYSLEY."

"ATHENÆUM STREET, ST. MILDRED'S
Sept. 6th.

"MY DEAR PHILIP,—No one can have a greater dislike than myself to what is called michief-making; therefore I leave it entirely to you to make what use you please of the following facts, which have fallen under my notice. Sir Guy Morville has been several times at St. Mildred's, in company with Tom Harewood, and more than once alone with some strange, questionable-looking people; and not many days ago, my maid met him coming out of a house in one of the low streets, which it is hard to assign a motive for his visiting. This, however, might be accident, and I should never have thought of mentioning it, but for a circumstance that occurred this morning. I had occasion to visit Grey's Bank, and while waiting, in conversation with Mr. Grey, a person came in whom I knew to be a notorious gambler, and offered a cheque to be changed. As it lay on the counter, my eye was caught by the signature. It was my uncle's I looked again, and could not be mistaken. It was a draft for £30 on Drummond, dated the 12th of August, to Sir Guy Morville, signed C. Edmonstone, and endorsed in Sir Guy's own writing, with the name of John White. In order that I might be certain that I was doing the poor young man no injustice, I outstaid the man, and asked who he was, when Mr. Grey confirmed me in my belief that it was one Jack White, a jockeying sort of man, who attends all the races in the country, and makes his livelihood by betting and gambling. And now, my dear brother, make what use of this fact you think fit, though I fear there is little hope of rescuing the poor youth from the fatal habits which are hereditary in his family, and must be strong indeed not to have been eradicated by such careful training as you say he has received. I leave it entirely to you, trusting in your excellent judgment, and only hoping you will not bring my name forward. Grieving much at having to bring the first to communicate such unpleasant tidings which will occasion so much vexation at Hollywell,

Your affectionate sister,
"MARGRET HENLEY."

Captain Morville was alone when he received the latter of these letters. At first a look divided between irony and melancholy passed over his face, as he read his sister's preface

and her hearsay evidence, but, as he went farther, his upper lip curled, and a sudden gleam, as of exultation in a verified prophecy, lighted his eye, shading off quickly, however, and giving place to an iron expression of rigidity and sternness, the compressed mouth, coldly-fixed eye, and sedate brow composed into a grave severity that might have served for an impersonation of stern justice. He looked through the letter a second time, folded it up, put it in his pocket, and went about his usual affairs; but the expression did not leave his face all day, and the next morning he took a day-ticket by the railway to Broadstone, where, as it was the day of the petty sessions, he had little doubt of meeting Mr. Edmonstone. Accordingly, he had not walked far down the High Street before he saw his uncle standing on the step of the post-office, opening a letter he had just received.

"Ha! Philip, what brings you here? The very man I wanted. Coming to Hollywell?"

"No, thank you, I am going back this evening," said Philip; and, as he spoke, he saw that the letter which Mr. Edmonstone held and twisted with a hasty, nervous movement, was in Guy's writing.

"Well, I am glad you are here, at any rate. Here is the most extraordinary thing! What possesses the boy I cannot guess. Here's Guy writing to me for—— What do you think? To send him a thousand pounds!"

"Hem!" said Philip in an expressive tone; yet, as if he was not very much amazed; "no explanation, I suppose?"

"No, none at all. Here, see what he says yourself. No! Yes you may," added Mr. Edmonstone, with a rapid glance at the end of the letter,—a movement first to retain it, and then following his first impulse, with an unintelligible murmuring.

Philip read—

"South Moor, Sept. 7th.

"My dear Mr. Edmonstone,—You will be surprised at the request I have to make you, after my resolution not to exceed my allowance. However, this is not for my own expenses, and it will not occur again. I should be much obliged to you to let me have £1000, in what manner you please, only I should be glad if it were soon. I am sorry I am not at liberty to tell you what I want it for, but I trust to your kindness. Tell Charlie I will write to him in a day or two; but,

between our work and walking to St. Mildred's for the letters, which we cannot help doing every day, the time for writing is short. Another month, however, and what a holiday it will be! Tell Amy she ought to be here to see the purple of the hills in the early morning; it almost makes up for having no sea. The races have been making St. Mildred's very gay; indeed, we laugh at Wellwood for having brought us here, by way of a quiet place. I never was in the way of so much dissipation in my life.

"Yours very affectionately,

"GUY MORVILLE."

"Well, what do you think of it? What would you do in my place? Eh, Philip? What can he want of it, eh?" said Mr. Edmonstone, tormenting his riding-whip, and looking up to study his nephew's face, which, with stern gravity in every feature, was bent over the letter, as if to weigh every line. "Eh, Philip?" repeated Mr. Edmonstone, several times, without obtaining an answer.

"This is no place for discussion," at last said Philip, deliberately returning the letter. "Come into the reading-room. We shall find no one there at this hour. Here we are!"

"Well—well—well," began Mr. Edmonstone, fretted by his coolness to the extreme of impatience, "what do you think of it? He can't be after any mischief; 'tis not in the boy; when—when he is all but—— Pooh! what am I saying? Well, what do you think?"

"I am afraid it confirms but too strongly a report which I received yesterday."

"From your sister? Does she know any thing about it?"

"Yes, from my sister. But I was very unwilling to mention it, because she particularly requests that her name may not be used. I came here to see whether you had heard of Guy lately, so as to judge whether it was needful to speak of it. This convinces me; but I must beg, in the first instance, that you will not mention her, not even to my aunt."

"Well, yes; very well. I promise. Only let me hear."

"Young Harewood has, I fear, led him into bad company. There can now be no doubt that he has been gambling."

Philip was not prepared for the effect of these words. His uncle started up, exclaiming, "Gambling! Impossible!

Some confounded slander! I don't believe one word of it! I won't hear such things said of him," he repeated, stammering with passion, and walking violently about the room. This did not last long; there was something in the unmoved way in which Philip waited till he had patience to listen, which gradually mastered him; his angry manner subsided, and, sitting down, he continued the argument in a would-be-composed voice.

"It is utterly impossible! Remember, he thinks himself bound not so much as to touch a billiard cue."

"I could have thought it impossible, but for what I have seen of the way in which promises are eluded by persons too strictly bound," said Philip. "The moral force of principle is the only efficient pledge."

"Principle! I should like to see who has better principles than Guy," cried Mr. Edmonstone. "You have said so yourself fifty times, and your aunt has said so, and Charles. I could as soon suspect myself." He was growing vehement, but again Philip's impertubability repressed his violence, and he asked, "Well, what evidence have you? Mind, I am not going to believe it without the strongest. I don't know that I would believe my own eyes against him."

"It is very sad to find such confidence misplaced," said Philip. "Most sincerely do I wish this could be proved to be a mistake; but this extraordinary request corroborates my sister's letter too fully."

"Let me hear," said Mr. Edmonstone, feebly.

Philip produced his letter, without reading the whole of it; for he could not bear the appearance of gossip and prying, and would not expose his sister; so he pieced it out with his own words, and made it sound far less discreditable to her. It was quite enough for Mr. Edmonstone; the accuracy of the details seemed to strike him dumb; and there was a long silence, which he broke, by saying, with a deep sigh,—

"Who could have thought it? Poor little Amy!"

"Amy?" exclaimed Philip.

"Why, ay. I did not mean to have said any thing of it, I am sure; but they did it among them," said Mr. Edmonstone, growing ashamed, under Philip's eye, as of a dreadful piece of imprudence. "I was out of the way, at the time, but I could not refuse my consent, you know, as things stood then."

"Do you mean to say that Amy is engaged to him?"

"Why, no; not exactly engaged, only on trial, you understand, to see if he will be steady. I was at Broadstone; 'twas mamma settled it all. Poor little thing, she is very much in love with him, I do believe; but there's an end of every thing now."

"It is very fortunate this has been discovered in time," said Philip. "Instead of pitying her, I should rejoice in her escape."

"Yes," said Mr. Edmonstone, ruefully. "Who could have thought it?"

"I am afraid the mischief is of long standing," proceeded Philip, resolved, since he saw his uncle so grieved, to press him strongly, thinking that to save Amy from such a marriage was an additional motive. "He could hardly have arrived at losing as much as a thousand pounds, all at once, in this month at St. Mildred's. Depend upon it, that painful as it may be at present, there is great reason, on her account, to rejoice in the discovery. You say he has never before applied to you for money?"

"Not a farthing beyond his allowance, except this unlucky thirty pounds, for his additional expense of the tutor and the lodging."

"You remember, however, that he has always seemed short of money, never appeared able to afford himself any little extra expense. You have noticed it, I know. You remember, too, how unsatisfactory his reserve about his proceedings in London has been, and how he has persisted in delaying there, in spite of all warnings. The work, no doubt, began there, under the guidance of his uncle, and now the St. Mildred's races and Tom Harewood have continued it."

"I wish he had never set foot in the place!"

"Nay; for Amy's sake, the exposure is an advantage, if not for his own. The course must have been long since begun; but he contrived to avoid what could lead to inquiry, till he has at length involved himself in some desperate scrape. You see, he especially desires to have the money *soon*, and he never even attempts to say you would approve of the object."

"Yes; he has the grace not to say that."

"Altogether, it is worse than I could have thought possible," said Philip. "I could have believed him unstable and thought-

less; but the concealment, and the attempting to gain poor Amy's affections in the midst of such a course——"

"Ay, ay!" cried Mr. Edmonstone, now fully provoked; "there is the monstrous part. He thought I was going to give up my poor little girl to a gambler, did he? but he shall soon see what I think of him,—riches, Redclyffe, title, and all!"

"I knew that would be your feeling."

"Feel! Yes; and he shall feel it, too. So, Sir Guy, you thought you had an old fool of a guardian, did you, whom you could blind as you pleased; but you shall soon see the difference!"

"Better begin cautiously," suggested Philip. "Remember his unfortunate temper, and write coolly."

"Coolly! You may talk of coolness; but 'tis enough to make one's blood boil to be served in such a way. With the face to be sending her messages in the very same letter! That is a pass beyond me, to stand coolly to see my daughter so treated."

"I would only give him the opportunity of saying what he can for himself. He may have some explanation."

"I'll admit of no explanation! Passing himself off for steadiness itself; daring to think of my daughter, and all the time going on in this fashion! I hate underhand ways! I'll have no explanation. He may give up all thoughts of her. I'll write and tell him so before I'm a day older; nay, before I stir from this room. My little Amy, indeed!"

Philip put no obstacles in the way of this proposal, for he knew that his uncle's displeasure, though hot at first, was apt to evaporate in exclamations; and he thought it likely that his good nature, his partiality for his ward, his dislike to causing pain to his daughter, and, above all, his wife's blind confidence in Guy, would, when once at home, so overpower his present indignation as to prevent the salutary strictness which was the only hope of reclaiming Guy. Besides, a letter written under Philip's inspection was likely to be more guarded, as well as more forcible, than an unassisted composition of his own, as was, indeed, pretty well proved by the commencement of his first attempt.

"My dear Guy,—I am more surprised than I could have expected at your application."

Philip read this aloud, so as to mark its absurdity, and he began again.

"I am greatly astonished, as well as concerned, at your application, which confirms the unpleasant reports——"

"Why say any thing of reports?" said Philip. "Reports are nothing. A man is not forced to defend himself from reports."

"Yes,—hum—ha,—the accounts I have received. No. You say there is not to be a word of Mrs. Henley?"

"Not a word that can lead her to be suspected."

"Confirms—confirms—" sighed Mr. Edmonstone.

"Don't write as if you went on hearsay evidence. Speak of proofs—irrefragable proofs—and then you convict him at once, without power of eluding you."

So Mr. Edmonstone proceeded to write, that the application confirmed the irrefragable proofs; then laughed at himself, and helplessly begged Philip to give him a start. It now stood thus:—

"Your letter of this morning has caused me more concern than surprise, as it unhappily only adds confirmation to the intelligence already in my possession; that either from want of resolution to withstand the seductions of designing persons, or by the impetuosity and instability of your own character, you have been led into the ruinous and degrading practice of gambling; and that from hence proceed the difficulties that occasion your application to me for money. I am deeply grieved at thus finding that neither the principles which have hitherto seemed to guide you, nor the pledges which you used to hold sacred, nor, I may add, the feelings you have so recently expressed towards a member of my family, have been sufficient to preserve you from yielding to a temptation which could never be presented to the mind of any one whose time was properly occupied in the business of his education."

"Is that all I am to say about her," exclaimed Mr. Edmonstone, "after the atrocious way the fellow has treated her in?"

"Since it is, happily, no engagement, I cannot see how you can, with propriety, assume that it is one, by speaking of breaking it off. Besides, give him no ground for complaint, or he will take refuge in believing himself ill-used. Ask him if he can disprove it, and when he cannot, it will be time

enough to act further. But wait—wait, sir," as the pen was moving over the paper, impatient to dash forward. "You have not told him yet of what you accuse him."

Philip meditated a few moments, then produced another sentence.

"I have no means of judging how long you have been following this unhappy course; I had rather believe it is of recent adoption, but I do not know how to reconcile this idea with the magnitude of your demand, unless your downward progress has been more rapid than usual in such beginnings. It would, I fear, be quite vain for me to urge upon you all the arguments and reasons that ought to have been present to your mind, and prevented you from taking the first fatal step. I can only entreat you to pause, and consider the ruin and degradation to which this hateful vice almost invariably conducts its victims, and consistently with my duty as your guardian, every thing in my power shall be done to extricate you from the embarrassments in which you have involved yourself. But, in the first place, I make it a point that you treat me with perfect confidence, and make a full, unequivocal statement of your proceedings; above all, that you explain the circumstances occasioning your request for this large sum. Remember, I say, complete candour on your part will afford the only means of rescuing you from difficulties, or of in any degree restoring you to my good opinion."

So far the letter had proceeded slowly, for Philip was careful and deliberate in composition; and while he was weighing his words, Mr. Edmonstone rushed on with something unfit to stand, so as to have to begin over again. At last, the town clock struck five; Philip started, declaring that if he was not at the station in five minutes, he should lose the train; engaged to come to Hollywell on the day an answer might be expected, and hastened away, satisfied by having seen two sheets nearly filled, and having said there was nothing more but to sign, seal, and send it.

Mr. Edmonstone had, however, a page of note-paper more, and it was with a sensation of relief that he wrote,—

"I wish, from the bottom of my heart, that you could clear yourself. If a dozen men had sworn it till they were black in the face, I would not have believed it of you that you could serve us in such a manner, after the way you have been treated at home, and to dare to think of my daughter

with such things on your mind. I could never have believed it, but for proofs Philip has brought; and I am sure he is as sorry as myself. Only tell the whole truth, and I will do my best to get you out of the scrape. Though all else must be at an end between us, I am your guardian still, and I will not be harsh with you."

He posted his letter, climbed up his tall horse, and rode home, rather heavy hearted; but his wrath burning out as he left Broadstone behind him. He saw his little Amy gay and lively, and could not bear to sadden her; so he persuaded himself that there was no need to mention the suspicions till he had heard what Guy had to say for himself. Accordingly, he told no one but his wife; and she, who thought Guy as unlikely to gamble as Amy herself, had not the least doubt that he would be able to clear himself, and agreed that it was much better to keep silence for the present.

CHAPTER XV.

'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

ST. MILDRED'S was a fashionable summer resort, which the virtues of a mineral spring, and the reputation of Dr. Henley, had contributed to raise to a high degree of prosperity. It stood at the foot of a magnificent range of beautifully formed hills, where the crescents and villas, white and smart, showed their own insignificance beneath the purple peaks that rose high above them.

About ten miles distant, across the hills, was Stylehurst, the parish of the late Archdeacon Morville, and the native place of Philip and his sister Margaret. It was an extensive parish, including a wide tract of the hilly country; and in a farmhouse in the midst of the moorland, midway between St. Mildred's and the village of Stylehurst, had Mr. Wellwood fixed himself with his three pupils.

Guy's first visit was of course to Mrs. Henley, and she was, on her side, prepared by her brother to patronize him as Philip would have done in her place. Her patronage was valuable in her own circle, her connexions were good; the Archdeacon's name was greatly respected; she had a handsome and well-regulated establishment, and this, together with talents which, having no family, she had cultivated more than most women have time to do, made her a person of considerable distinction at St. Mildred's. She was, in fact, the leading lady of the place—the manager of the book-club, in the chair at all the charitable committees, and the principal person in

society, giving literary parties, with a degree of exclusiveness that made admission to them a privilege.

She was a very fine woman, handsomer at two-and-thirty than in her early bloom; her height little less than that of her tall brother, and her manner and air had something very distinguished. The first time Guy saw her, he was strongly reminded both of Philip and of Mrs. Edmonstone, but not pleasingly. She seemed to be her aunt, without the softness and motherly affection, coupled with the touch of *naïveté* that gave Mrs. Edmonstone her freshness and loveableness; and her likeness to her brother included that decided, self-reliant air, which became him well enough, but which did not sit as appropriately on a woman.

Guy soon discovered another resemblance—for the old, unaccountable impatience of Philip's conversation, and relief in escaping from it, haunted him before he had been a quarter of an hour in Mrs. Henley's drawing-room. She asked after the Hollywell party; she had not seen her cousins since her marriage, and, happily for his feelings, passed over Laura and Amy as if they were nonentities; but they were all too near his heart for him to be able with patience to hear "poor Charles's" temper regretted, and still less the half-sarcastic, half-compassionate tone in which she implied that her aunt spoilt him dreadfully, and showed how cheap she held both Mr. and Mrs. Edmonstone. Two years ago, Guy could not have kept down his irritation; but now he was master of himself sufficiently to give a calm, courteous reply, so conveying his own respect for them, that Mrs. Henley was almost disconcerted.

Stylehurst had great interest for Guy, both for the sake of Archdeacon Morville's kindness, and as the home which Philip regarded with affection, that seemed the one softening touch in his character. So Guy visited the handsome church, studied the graveyard, and gathered the traditions of the place from the old sexton's wife, who rejoiced in finding an auditor for her long stories of the good Archdeacon, Miss Fanny, and Mr. Philip. She shook her head, saying times were changed, and, "Miss Morville that was, never came neist the place."

The squire, Colonel Harewood, was an old friend of his grandfather's, and therefore was to be called on. He had never been wise, and had been dissipated chiefly from vacancy of mind; he was now growing old, and led a quieter

life, and though Guy did not find him a very entertaining companion, he accepted his civilities readily, for his grandfather's sake. When his sons came home, Guy recognised in them the description of men he was wont to shun at Oxford, as much from distaste as from principle; but though he did not absolutely avoid them, he saw little of them, being very busy, and having pleasant companions in his fellow pupils. It was a very merry party at South Moor, and Guy's high spirits made him the life of every thing.

The first time Mr. Wellwood went to call on his cousins at St. Mildred's, the daughters of that officer who had fallen by the hand of old Sir Guy, he began repeating, for the twentieth time, what an excellent fellow Morville was; then said he should not have troubled them with any of his pupils, but Morville would esteem their receiving him as an act of forgiveness, and besides, he wished them to know one whom he valued so highly. Guy thus found himself admitted into an entirely new region. There were two sisters, together in every thing. Jane, the younger, was a kind-hearted, commonplace person, who would never have looked beyond the ordinary range of duties and charities; but Elizabeth was one of those who rise up, from time to time, as burning and shining lights. It was not spending a quiet, easy life, making her charities secondary to her comforts, but devoting time, strength, and goods; not merely giving away what she could spare, but actually sharing all with the poor, reserving nothing for the future. She not only taught the young, and visited the distressed, but she gathered orphans into her house, and nursed the sick day and night. Neither the means nor the strength of the two sisters could ever have been supposed equal to what they were known to have achieved. It seemed as if the power grew with the occasion, and as if they had some help which could not fail them. Guy venerated them more and more, and many a long letter about them was written to Mrs. Edmonstone, for Amy to read. There is certainly a "tyrannous hate" in the world for unusual goodness, which is a rebuke to it, and there was a strong party against the sisters. At the head of it was Mrs. Henley, who had originally been displeased at their preferring the direction of the clergyman to that of the ladies' committee, though the secret cause of her dislike was, perhaps, that Elizabeth Wellwood was just what Margaret Morville might have been. So she blamed them not

indeed, for their charity, but for slight peculiarities which might well have been lost in the brightness of the works of mercy. She spoke as with her father's authority, though, if she had been differently disposed, she might have remembered that his system and principles were the same as theirs, and that, had he been alive, he would probably have fully approved of their proceedings. Archdeacon Morville's name was of great weight, and justified many persons, in their own opinion, in the opposition made to Miss Wellwood, impeding her usefulness, and subjecting her to endless petty calumnies.

These made Guy very angry. He knew enough of the Archdeacon through Mrs. Edmonstone, and the opinions held by Philip, to think his daughter was ascribing to him what he had never held; but, be that as it might, Guy could not bear to hear good evil spoken of, and his indignation was stirred as he heard these spiteful reports uttered by people who sat at home at ease against one whose daily life was only too exalted for their imitation. His brow contracted, his eye kindled, his lip was bitten, and now and then, when he trusted himself to reply, it was with a keen, sharp power of rebuke that made people look round, astonished to hear such forcible words from one so young. Mrs. Henley was afraid of him, without knowing it; she thought she was sparing the Morville temper when she avoided the subject, but as she stood in awe of no one else, except her brother, she disliked him accordingly.

One evening, Guy had been dining at Dr. Henley's, and was setting out, enjoying his escape from Mrs. Henley and her friends, and rejoicing in the prospect of a five miles' walk over the hills by moonlight. He had only gone the length of two streets, when he saw a dark figure at a little distance from him, and a voice which he had little expected to hear, called out,—

"Sir Guy himself! No one else could whistle that Swedish air so correctly!"

"My uncle!" exclaimed Guy. "I did not know that you were here."

Mr. Dixon laughed, said something about a fortunate rencontre, and began an account about a concert somewhere or other, mixed up with something about his wife and child, all so rambling and confused, that Guy, beginning to suspect he had been drinking, was only anxious to get rid of him, asked

where he lodged, and talked of coming to see him in the morning. He soon found, however, that this had not been the case, at least, not to any great extent. Dixon was only nervous and excited, either about something he had done, or some request he had to make, and he went on walking by his nephew's side, talking in a strange, desultory way of open, generous-hearted fellows overlooking a little indiscretion, and of Guy's riches, which he seemed to think inexhaustible.

"If there is any thing that you want me to do for you, tell me plainly what it is," said Guy, at last.

Mr. Dixon began to overwhelm him with thanks, but he cut them short. "I promise nothing. Let me hear what you want, and I can judge whether I can do it."

Sebastian broke out into exclamations at the words "if I can," as if he thought every thing in the power of the heir of Redclyffe.

"Have I not told you," said Guy, "that for the present I have very little command of money? Hush! no more of that," he added, sternly, cutting off an imprecation which his uncle was commencing on those who kept him so short.

"And you are content to bear it? Did you never hear of ways and means? If you were to say but one word of borrowing, they would go down on their knees to you, and offer you every farthing you have to keep you in their own hands."

"I am quite satisfied," said Guy, coldly.

"The greater fool are you!" was on Dixon's lips, but he did not utter it, because he wanted to propitiate him; and, after some more circumlocution, Guy succeeded in discovering that he had been gambling, and had lost an amount which, unless he could obtain immediate assistance, would become known, and lead to the loss of his character and situation. Guy stood and considered. He had an impulse, but he did not think it a safe one, and resolved to give himself time.

"I do not say that I cannot help you," he answered; "but I must have time to consider."

"Time! would you see me ruined while you are considering?"

"I suppose this must be paid immediately. Where do you lodge?"

Mr. Dixon told him the street and number.

"You shall hear from me to-morrow morning. I cannot trust my present thoughts. Good night!"

Mr. Dixon would fain have guessed whether the present thoughts were favourable, but all his hope in his extremity was in his nephew; it might be fatal to push him too far, and, with a certain trust in his good-nature, Sebastian allowed him to walk away without further remonstrance.

Guy knew his own impetuous nature too well to venture to act on impulse in a doubtful case. He had now first to consider what he was able to do, and secondly what he would do; and this was not as clear to his mind as in the earlier days of his acquaintance with his uncle.

Their intercourse had never been on a comfortable footing. It would, perhaps, have been better if Philip's advice had been followed, and no connexion kept up. Guy had once begged for some definite rule, since there was always vexation when he was known to have been with his uncle, and yet Mr. Edmonstone would never absolutely say he ought not to see him. As long as his guardian permitted it, or rather winked at it, Guy did not think it necessary to attend to Philip's marked disapproval. Part of it was well founded, but part was dislike to all that might be considered as vulgar, and part was absolute injustice to Sebastian Dixon; there was every thing that could offend in his line of argument, and in the very circumstance of his interfering; and Guy had a continual struggle, in which he was not always successful, to avoid showing the affront he had taken, and to reason down his subsequent indignation. The ever recurring irritation which Philip's conversation was apt to cause him, made him avoid it as far as he could, and retreat in haste from the subjects on which they were most apt to disagree, and so his manner had assumed an air of reserve, and almost of distrust, with his cousin, that was very unlike its usual winning openness.

This had been one unfortunate effect of his intercourse with his uncle, and another was a certain vague, dissatisfied feeling with his silence, and Philip's insinuations respecting the days he spent in London left on Mr. Edmonstone's mind, and which gained strength from their recurrence. The days were, indeed, not many; it was only that in coming from and going to Oxford, he slept a night at an hotel in London (for his uncle never would take him to his lodgings, never even would tell him where they were, but always gave his address

at the place of his engagement), was conducted by him to some concert in the evening, and had him to breakfast in the morning. He could not think there was any harm in this; he explained all he had done to Mr. Edmonstone the first time, but nothing was gained by it: his visits to London continued to be treated as something to be excused or overlooked —as something not quite correct.

He would almost have been ready to discontinue them, but that he saw that his uncle regarded him with affection, and he could not bear the thought of giving up a poor relation for the sake of the opinion of his rich friends. These meetings were the one pure pleasure to which Sebastian looked, recalling to him the happier days of his youth, and of his friendship with Guy's father; and when Guy perceived how he valued them, it would have seemed a piece of cruel neglect to gratify himself by giving the time to Hollywell.

Early in the course of their acquaintance, the importunity of a creditor revealed that, in spite of his handsome salary, Sebastian Dixon was often in considerable distress for money. In process of time, Guy discovered that at the time his uncle had been supporting his sister and her husband in all the luxury he thought befitted their rank, he had contracted considerable debts, and he had only been able to return to England on condition of paying so much a year to his creditors. This left him very little on which to maintain his family; but still his pride made him bent on concealing his difficulties, and it was not without a struggle that he would at first consent to receive assistance from his nephew.

Guy resolved that these debts, which he considered as in fact his father's own, should be paid as soon as he had the command of his property; but, in the mean time, he thought himself bound to send his uncle all the help in his power, and when once the effort of accepting it at all was over, Dixon's expectations extended far beyond his power. His allowance was not large, and the constant requests for a few pounds to meet some pressing occasion were more than he could well meet. They kept him actually a great deal poorer than men without a tenth part of his fortune, and at the end of the term he would look back with surprise at having been able to pay his way; but still he contrived neither to exceed his allowance, nor to get into debt. This was, indeed, only done by a rigid self-denial of little luxuries such as most young men look

on nearly as necessaries; but he had never been brought up to think self-indulgence a consequence of riches, he did not care what was said of him. He had no expensive tastes, he did not seek after society, so that he was not ill prepared for such a course, and only thought of it as an assistance in abstaining from the time-wasting that might have tempted him if he had had plenty of money to spend.

The only thing that concerned him was a growing doubt lest he might be feeding extravagance instead of doing good; and the more he disliked himself for the suspicion, the more it would return. There was no doubt much distress; the children were sickly; several of them died; the doctor's bills, and other expenses, pressed heavily, and Guy blamed himself for having doubted. Yet again, he could not conceal from himself traces that his uncle was careless and imprudent. He had once, indeed, in a violent fit of self-reproach, confessed as much, allowed that what ought to have been spent in the maintenance of his family, had gone in gambling, but immediately after, he had been seized with a fit of terror, and implored Guy to guard the secret, since, if once it came to the knowledge of his creditors, it would be all over with him.

Concealment of his present difficulties was therefore no less necessary than assistance in paying the sum he owed. Indeed, as far as Guy was able to understand his confused statement, what he wanted was at once to pay a part of his debt, before he could go on to a place where he was engaged to perform, and where he would earn enough to make up the rest.

Guy had intended to have sent for Deloraine, but had since given up the idea, in order to be able to help forward some plans of Miss Wellwood's, and resigning this project would enable him to place thirty pounds at his uncle's disposal, leaving him just enough to pay his expenses at South Moor, and carry him back to Hollywell. It was sorely against his inclination that, instead of helping a charity, his savings should go to pay gaming debts, and his five miles' walk was spent in self-debate on the right and wrong of the matter, and questions what should be done for the future—for he was beginning to awaken to the sense of his responsibility, and feared lest he might be encouraging vice.

Very early next morning Guy put his head into his tutor's room, announced that he must walk into St. Mildred's on business, but should be back by eleven at the latest, ran

down-stairs, called Bustle, and made interest with the farmer's wife for a hunch of dry bread and a cup of new milk.

Then, rejoicing that he had made up his mind, though not light-hearted enough to whistle, he walked across the moorland, through the white morning mist, curling on the sides of the hills in fantastic forms, and now and then catching his lengthened shadow, so as to make him smile by reminding him of the spectre of the Brocken.

Not without difficulty, he found a back street, and a little shop, where a slovenly maid was sweeping the steps, and the shutters were not yet taken down. He asked if Mr. Dixon lodged there. "Yes," the woman said, staring in amazement that such a gentleman could be there at that time in the morning, asking for Mr. Dixon.

"Is he at home?"

"Yes, sir; but he is not up yet. He was very late last night. Did you want to speak to him? I'll tell Mrs. Dixon."

"Is Mrs. Dixon here? Then tell her Sir Guy Morville would be glad to speak to her."

The maid curtseyed, hurried off, and returned with a message from Mrs. Dixon to desire he would walk in. She conducted him through a dark passage, and up a still darker stair, into a dingy little parlour, with a carpet of red and green stripes, a horsehair sofa, a grate covered with cut paper, and a general perfume of brandy and cigars. There were some preparations for breakfast, but no one was in the room but a little girl, about seven years old, dressed in shabby-genteel mourning.

She was pale and sickly-looking, but her eyes were of a lovely deep blue, with a very sweet expression, and a profusion of thick flaxen curls hung round her neck and shoulders. She said, in a soft, little shy voice,—

"Mamma says she will be here directly, if you will excuse her a moment."

Having made this formal speech, the little thing was creeping off on tiptoe, so as to escape before the maid shut the door, but Guy held out his hand, sat down so as to be on a level with her, and said,—

"Don't go, my little maid. Won't you come and speak to your cousin Guy?"

Children never failed to be attracted, whether by the

winning beauty of his smile, or the sweetness of the voice in which he spoke to any thing small or weak, and the little girl willingly came up to him, and put her hands into his. He stroked her thick, silky curls, and asked her name.

"Marianne," she answered.

It was his mother's name, and this little creature had more resemblance to his tenderly cherished vision of his young mother than any description Dixon could have given. He drew her closer to him, took the other small, cold hand, and asked her how she liked St. Mildred's.

"Oh! much better than London. There are flowers!" and she proudly exhibited a cup holding some ragged robins, dead nettles, and other common flowers, which a country child would have held cheap. He admired, and gained more of her confidence, so that she had begun to chatter away quite freely about "the high, high hills that reached up to the sky, and the pretty stones," till the door opened, and Mrs. Dixon and Bustle made their entrance.

Marianne was so much afraid of the dog, Guy so eager to console, and her mother to scold her, and protest that it should not be turned out, that there was nothing but confusion, until Guy had shown her that Bustle was no dangerous wild beast, induced her to accept his offered paw, and lay a timid finger on his smooth, black head, after which the transition was short to dog and child sitting lovingly together on the floor, Marianne stroking his ears, and admiring him with a sort of silent ecstasy.

Mrs. Dixon was a great, coarse, vulgar woman, and Guy perceived why his uncle had been so averse to taking him to his home, and how he must have felt the contrast between such a wife and his beautiful sister. She had a sort of broad sense, and absence of pretension, but her manner of talking was by no means pleasant, as she querulously accused her husband of being the cause of all their misfortunes, not even restrained by the presence of her child from entering into a full account of his offences.

Mrs. Dixon said she should say not a word, she should not care if it was not for the child, but she could not see her wronged by her own father, and not complain; poor little dear! she was the last, and she supposed she should not keep her long.

It then appeared that on her husband's obtaining an ea

gagement for a series of concerts at the chief county town, Mrs. Dixon had insisted on coming with him to St. Mildred's in the hope that country air might benefit Marianne, who, in a confined lodging in London, was pining and dwindling as her brothers and sisters had done before her. Sebastian, who liked to escape from his wife's grumbling and rigid supervision, and looked forward to amusement in his own way at the races, had grudgingly allowed her to come, and, as she described it, had been reluctant to go to even so slight an expense in the hope of saving his child's life. She had watched him as closely as she could; but he had made his escape, and the consequences Guy already knew.

If any thing could have made it worse, it was finding that after parting last night, he had returned, tried to retrieve his luck, had involved himself further, had been drinking more; and at the very hour when his nephew was getting up to see what could be done for him, had come home in a state, which made it by no means likely that he would be presentable, if his wife called him, as she offered to do.

Guy much preferred arranging with her, what was to be done on the present emergency. She was disappointed at finding thirty pounds was all the help he could give; but she was an energetic woman, full of resources, and saw her way, with this assistance, through the present difficulty. The great point was to keep the gambling propensities out of sight of the creditors; and as long as this was done, she had hope. Dixon would go the next morning to the town where the musical meeting was to be held, and there he would be with his employers, where he had a character to preserve, so that she was in no fear of another outbreak.

It ended, therefore, in his leaving with her Mr. Edmonstone's draft, securing its destination by endorsing it to the person who was to receive it; and wishing her good-morning, after a few more kind words to little Marianne, who had sat playing with Bustle all the time, sidling continually nearer and nearer to her new cousin, her eyes bent down, and no expression on her face which could enable him to guess how far she listened to or comprehended conversation so unfit for her ear. When he rose to go, and stooped to kiss her, she looked wistfully in his face, and held up a small sparkling bit of spar, the most precious of all her hoards, gleaned from the roadsides of St. Mildred's.

"What, child, do you want to give it to Sir Guy?" said her mother. "He does not want such trumpery, my dear, though you make such a work with it."

"Did you mean to give it to me, my dear?" said Guy, as the child hung her head, and crimsoned with blushes, could scarcely whisper her timid "Yes."

He praised it, and let her put it in his waistcoat pocket, and promised he would always keep it; and kissed her again, and left her a happy child, confident in his promise of always keeping it, though her mother argued that he would throw it over the next hedge.

He was at South Moor by eleven o'clock, in time for his morning's business, and made up for the troubles of the last few hours by a long talk with Mr. Wellwood, in the afternoon, while the other two pupils were gone to the races, for which he was not inclined, after his two ten-mile walks.

The conversation was chiefly on Church prospects in general, and particular on Miss Wellwood and her plans; how they had by degrees enlarged and developed as the sin and misery and ignorance around had forced themselves more plainly on her notice, and her means had increased and grown under her hand in the very distribution. Other schemes were dawning on her mind, of which the foremost was the foundation of a sort of school and hospital united, under the charge of herself, her sister, and several other ladies, who were desirous of joining her, as a sisterhood. But at present it was hoping against hope, for there were no funds with which to make a commencement. All this was told at unawares, drawn forth by different questions and remarks, till Guy inquired how much "it would take to give them a start?"

"It is impossible to say. Any thing, I suppose, between one thousand and twenty. But, by the by, this design of Elizabeth's is an absolute secret. If you had not almost guessed it, I should never have said one word to you about it. You are a particularly dangerous man, with your connexion with Mrs. Henley. You must take special good care nothing of it reaches her."

Guy's first impression was, that he was the last person to mention it to Mrs. Henley; but when he remembered how often her brother was at Hollywell, he perceived that there might be a train for carrying the report back again to her, and recognized the absolute necessity of silence.

He said nothing at the time, but a bright scheme came into his head, resulting in the request for a thousand pounds, which caused so much astonishment. He thought himself rather shabby to have named no more, and was afraid it was an offering that cost him nothing; but he much enjoyed devising beforehand the letter with which he would place the money at the disposal of Miss Wellwood's hospital.

CHAPTER XVI.

Yet burns the sun on high beyond the cloud;
  Each in his northern cave,
The warm winds linger, but to be allowed
  One breathing o'er the wave,
One flight across the unquiet sky;
Swift as a vane may turn on high,
  The smile of heaven comes on.
So waits the Lord behind the veil,
His light on frenzied cheek, or pale,
  To shed when the dark hour is gone.

LYRA INNOCENTIUM.

ON the afternoon on which Guy expected an answer from Mr. Edmonstone, he walked with his fellow-pupil, Harry Graham, to see if there were any letters for him at Dr. Henley's.

The servant said Mrs. Henley was at home; and asked them to come in and take their letters. These were lying on a marble table, in the hall; and while the man looked in the drawing-room for his mistress, and sent one of the maids up-stairs in quest of her, Guy hastily took up one, bearing his address, in the well-known hand of Mr. Edmonstone.

Young Graham, who had taken up a newspaper, was startled by Guy's loud, sudden exclamation,—

"Ha! What on earth does this mean?"

And looking up, saw his face of a burning, glowing red, the features almost convulsed, the large veins in the forehead and temples swollen with the blood that rushed through them; and if ever his eyes flashed with the dark lightning of Sir Hugh's, it was then.

"Merville! What's the matter?"

"Intolerable!—insulting! Me? What does he mean?"

continued Guy, his passion kindling more and more. "Proofs? I should like to see them! The man is crazy! I to confess. Ha!" as he came towards the end, "I see it. I see it. It is Philip, is it, that I have to thank? Meddling coxcomb! I'll make him repent it," added he, with a grim fierceness of determination. "Slandering me to them! And *that*,"—looking at the words with regard to Amy,—"that passes all. He shall see what it is to insult me!"

"What is it? Your guardian out of humour?" asked his companion.

"My guardian is a mere weak fool. I don't blame him,—he can't help it; but to see him made a tool of! He twists him round his finger, abuses his weakness to insult—to accuse. But he shall give me an account!"

Guy's voice had grown lower and more husky; but though the sound sunk, the force of passion rather increased than diminished; it was like the low distant sweep of the tempest as it whirls away, preparing to return with yet more tremendous might. His colour, too, had faded to paleness, but the veins were still swollen, purple, and throbbing; and there was a stillness about him that made his wrath more than fierce, intense, almost appalling.

Harry Graham was dumb with astonishment; but while Guy spoke, Mrs. Henley had come down, and was standing before them, beginning a greeting. The blood rushed back into Guy's cheeks; and, controlling his voice with powerful effort, he said,—

"I have had an insulting—an unpleasant letter," he added, catching himself up. "You must excuse me," and he was gone.

"What has happened?" exclaimed Mrs. Henley, though from her brother's letter, as well as from her observations during a long and purposely slow progress, along a railed gallery overhanging the hall, and down a winding staircase, she knew pretty well the whole history of his anger.

"I don't know," said young Graham. "Some absurd person interfering between him and his guardian. I should be sorry to be him to fall in his way just now. It must be something properly bad. I never saw a man in such a rage. I think I had better go after him, and see what he has done with himself."

"You don't think," said Mrs. Henley, detaining him,

"that his guardian could have been finding fault with him with reason?"

"Who? Morville? His guardian must have a sharp eye for picking holes if he can find any in Morville. Not a steadier fellow going,—only too much so."

"Ah!" thought Mrs. Henley, "these young men always hang together;" and she let him escape without further question. But when he emerged from the house, Guy was already out of sight, and he could not succeed in finding him.

Guy had burst out of the house, feeling as if nothing could relieve him but free air and rapid motion; and on he hurried, fast, faster, conscious alone of the wild, furious tumult of rage and indignation against the maligner of his innocence, who was knowingly ruining him with all that was dearest to him, insulting him by reproaches on his breaking a most sacred, unblemished word, and, what Guy felt scarcely less keenly, forcing kind-hearted Mr. Edmonstone into a persecution so foreign to his nature. The agony of suffering such an accusation, and from such a quarter,—the violent storm of indignation and pride,—wild, undefined ideas of a heavy reckoning,—above all, the dreary thought of Amy denied to him for ever,—all these swept over him, and swayed him by turns, with the dreadful intensity belonging to a nature formed for violent passions, which had broken down, in the sudden shock, all the barriers imposed on them by a long course of self-restraint.

On he rushed, reckless whither he went or what he did; driven forward by the wild impulse of passion, far over moor and hill, up and down, till at last, exhausted at once by the tumult within, and by the violent bodily exertion, a stillness—a suspension of thought and sensation—ensued; and when this passed, he found himself seated on a rock which crowned the summit of one of the hills, his handkerchief loosened, his waistcoat open, his hat thrown off, his temples burning and throbbing with a feeling of distraction, and the agitated beatings of his heart almost stifling his panting breath.

"Yes," he muttered to himself, "a heavy account shall he pay me for this crowning stroke of a long course of slander and ill-will! Have I not seen it? Has not he hated me from the first, misconstrued every word and deed, though I have tried, striven earnestly, to be his friend,—borne, as not another soul would have done, with his impertinent interference and intolerable patronizing airs? But he has seen the

last of it! Any thing but this might be forgiven; but sowing dissension between me and the Edmonstones,—maligning me there. Never! Knowing, too, as he seems to do, how I stand, it is the very ecstasy of malice! Ay! this very night it shall be exposed, and he shall be taught to beware—made to know with whom he has to deal."

Guy uttered this last with teeth clenched, in an excess of deep, vengeful ire. Never had Morville of the whole line felt more deadly fierceness than held sway over him, as he contemplated his revenge, looked forward with a dire complacency to the punishment he would wreak, not for this offence alone, but for a long course of enmity. He sat, absorbed in the plan of vengeance, perfectly still, for his physical exhaustion was complete; but as the pulsations of his heart grew less wild, his purpose became sterner and more fixed. He devised its execution, planned his sudden journey, saw himself bursting on Philip early next morning, summoning him to answer for his falsehoods. The impulse to action seemed to restore his power overhis senses. He looked round, to see where he was, raising his head from his hands.

The sun was setting opposite to him, in a flood of gold,—a ruddy ball, surrounded with its pomp of clouds, on the dazzling sweep of horizon. That sight recalled him not only to himself, but to his true and better self; the good angel, so close to him for the twenty years of his life, had been driven aloof but for a moment, and now, either that, or a still higher and holier power, made the setting sun bring to his mind, almost to his ear, the words,—

> "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,
> Neither give place to the devil."

Guy had what some would call a vivid imagination, others a lively faith. He shuddered; then, his elbows on his knees, and his hands clasped over his brow, he sat, bending forward, with his eyes closed, wrought up in a fearful struggle; while it was to him as if he saw the hereditary demon of the Morvilles watching by his side, to take full possession of him as a rightful prey, unless the battle was fought and won before that red orb had passed out of sight. Yes, the besetting fiend of his family—the spirit of defiance and resentment—that was driving him, even now, while realizing its presence, to disregard all thoughts save of the revenge for which he could barter every thing—every hope once precious to him.

It was horror at such wickedness that first checked him, and brought him back to the combat. His was not a temper that was satisfied with half measures. He locked his hands more rigidly together, vowing to compel himself, ere he left the spot, to forgive his enemy—forgive him candidly—forgive him, so as never again to have to say, "I forgive him!" He did not try to think, for reflection only lashed up his sense of the wrong; but, as if there was power in the words alone, he forced his lips to repeat,—

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

Coldly and hardly were they spoke at first: again he pronounced them, again, again,—each time the tone was softer, each time they came more from the heart. At last, the remembrance of greater wrongs and worse revilings came upon him; his eyes filled with tears, the most subduing and healing of all thoughts—that of the great Example—became present to him; the foe was driven back.

Still he kept his hands over his face. The tempter was not yet defeated without hope. It was not enough to give up his first intention, (no great sacrifice, as he perceived, now that he had time to think how Philip would be certain to treat a challenge,) it was not enough to wish no ill to his cousin, to intend no evil measure, he must pardon from the bottom of his heart, regard him candidly, and not magnify his injuries.

He sat long in deep thought, his head bent down and his countenance stern with inward conflict. It was the hardest part of the whole battle, for the Morville disposition was as vindictive as passionate; but, at last, he recovered clearness of vision. His request might well appear unreasonable, and possibly excite suspicion; and, for the rest, it was doing a man of honour, like Philip, flagrant injustice to suspect him of originating slanders. He was, of course, under a mistake; had acted, not perhaps kindly, but, as he thought, rightly and judiciously, in making his suspicions known. If he had caused his uncle to write provokingly, every one knew that was his way; he might very properly wish, under his belief, to save Amabel; and though the manner might have been otherwise, the proceeding itself admitted complete justification. Indeed, when Guy recollected the frenzy of his rage, and his own murderous impulse, he was shocked to think that

he had ever sought the love of that pure and gentle creature, as if it had been a cruel and profane linking of innocence to evil. He was appalled at the power of his fury, he had not known he was capable of it, for his boyish passion, even when unrestrained, had never equalled this, in all the strength of early manhood.

He looked up, and saw that the last remnant of the sun's disk was just disappearing beneath the horizon. The victory was won!

But Guy's feeling was not the rejoicing of the conquest, it was more the relief which is felt by a little child, weary of its fit of naughtiness, when its tearful face is raised, mournful, yet happy, in having one true repentance, and it says, "I *am* sorry now."

He rose, looked at his watch, wondered to find it so late; gazed round, and considered his bearings, perceiving, with a sense of shame, how far he had wandered; then retraced his steps slowly and wearily, and did not reach South Moor till long after dark.

CHAPTER XVII.

> My blood hath been too cold and temperate,
> Unapt to stir at these indignities;
> But you have found me.
>
> KING HENRY IV.

PHILIP, according to promise, appeared at Hollywell, and a volume of awful justice seemed written on his brow. Charles, though ignorant of its cause, perceived this at a glance, and greeted him thus:—

"Enter Don Philip II., the Duke of Alva, alguazils corregidors, and executioners."

"Is any thing the matter, Philip?" said Amy, a question which took him by surprise, as he could not believe her in ignorance. He was sorry for her, and answered gravely,—

"Nothing is amiss with me, thank you, Amy."

She knew he meant that he would tell no more, and would have thought no more about it, but that she saw her mother was very uneasy.

"Did you ask whether there were any letters at the post?" said Charles. "Guy is using us shamefully—practising self-denial on us, I suppose. Is there no letter from him?"

"There is," said Philip, reluctantly.

"Well, where is it?"

"It is to your father."

"Oh!" said Charles, with a disappointed air. "Are you sure? Depend on it, you overlooked my M. He has owed me a letter this fortnight. Let me see."

"It is for my uncle," repeated Philip, as if to put an end to the subject.

"Then he has been so stupid as to forget my second name. Come, give it me. I shall have it sooner or later."

"I assure you, Charles, it is not for you."

"Would not any one suppose he had been reading it?" exclaimed Charles.

"Did you know Mary Ross was gone to stay with her brother John?" broke in Mrs. Edmonstone, in a nervous, hurried manner.

"No; is she?" replied Philip.

"Yes; his wife is ill."

The universal feeling was that something was amiss, and mamma was in the secret. Amy looked wistfully at her, but Mrs. Edmonstone only gazed at the window, and so they continued for some minutes, while an uninteresting exchange of question and answer was kept up between her and her nephew, until at length the dressing-bell rang, and cleared the room. Mrs. Edmonstone lingered till her son and daughters were gone, and said,—

"You have heard from St. Mildred's?"

"Yes," said Philip, as if he was as little inclined to be communicative to her as to his cousins.

"From Guy, or from Margaret?"

"From Margaret."

"But you say there is a letter from him."

"Yes, for my uncle."

"Does she say nothing more satisfactory?" asked his aunt, her anxiety tortured by his composure. "Has she learnt no more."

"Nothing more of his proceedings. I see Amy knows nothing of the matter?"

"No; her papa thought there was no need to distress her till we had seen whether he could explain."

"Poor little thing!" said Philip; "I am very sorry for her."

Mrs. Edmonstone did not choose to discuss her daughter's affairs with him, and she turned the conversation to ask if Margaret said much of Guy.

"She writes to tell the spirit in which he received my uncle's letter. It is only the Morville temper, again; and of course, whatever you may think of that on Amy's account, I shall never regard it, as concerns myself, as other than his misfortune. I hope he may be able to explain the rest."

"Ah! there comes your uncle!" And Mr. Edmonstone entered.

"How d'ye do, Philip? Brought better news, eh?"

"Here is a letter to speak for itself."

"Eh? From Guy? Give it me. What does he say? Let me see. Here, mamma, read it, your eyes are best."

Mrs. Edmonstone read as follows:—

"My dear Mr. Edmonstone,—Your letter surprised and grieved me very much. I cannot guess what proofs Philip may think he has, of what I never did, and, therefore, I cannot refute them otherwise than by declaring that I never gamed in my life. Tell me what they are, and I will answer them. As to a full confession, I could of course tell you of much in which I have done wrongly, though not in the way which he supposes. On that head, I have nothing to confess. I am sorry I am prevented from satisfying you about the £1000, but I am bound in honour not to mention the purpose for which I wanted it. I am sure you could never believe I could have said what I did to Mrs. Edmonstone if I had begun on a course which I detest from the bottom of my heart. Thank you very much for the kindness of the latter part of your letter. I do not know how I could have borne it, if it had ended as it began. I hope you will soon send me these proofs of Philip's. Ever your affectionate

"G. M."

Not a little surprised was Philip to find that he was known to be Guy's accuser, but the conclusion revealed that his style had betrayed him, and that Mr. Edmonstone had finished with some mention of him, and he resolved that henceforth he would never leave a letter of his own dictation till he had seen it signed and sealed.

"Well!" cried Mr. Edmonstone, joyfully beating his own hand with his glove, "that is all right. I knew it would be so. He can't even guess what we are at. I am glad we did not tease poor little Amy. Eh, mamma?—eh, Philip?" the last eh being uttered much more doubtfully, and less triumphantly, than the first.

"I wonder you think it right," said Philip.

"What more would you have?" said Mr. Edmonstone, hastily.

"Confidence."

"Eh? Oh, ay, he says he can't tell—bound in honour."

"It is easy to write off-hand and say I cannot satisfy you,

I am bound in honour; but that is not what most persons would think a full justification, especially considering the terms on which you stand."

"Why, yes, he might have said more. It would have been safe enough with me."

"It is his usual course of mystery, reserve, and defiance."

"The fact is," said Mr. Edmonstone, turning away, "that it is a very proper letter; right sense, proper feeling—and if he never gamed in his life, what would you have more?"

"There are different ways of understanding such a denial as this," said Philip. "See, he says not in the way in which I suppose." He held up his hand authoritatively, as his aunt was about to interpose. "It was against gaming that his vow was made. I never thought he had played, but he never says he has not betted."

"He would never be guilty of a subterfuge!" exclaimed Mrs. Edmonstone, indignantly.

"I should not have thought so, without the evidence of the payment of the cheque, my uncle had just given him, to this gambling fellow," said Philip; "yet it is only the natural consequence of the habit of eluding inquiry into his visits to London."

"I can't see any reason for so harsh an accusation," said she.

"I should hardly want more reason than his own words. He refuses to answer the question on which my uncle's good opinion depends; he owns he has been to blame, and thus retracts his full denial. In my opinion, his letter says nothing so plainly as 'While I can stand fair with you, I do not wish to break with you.'"

"He will not find that quite so easy!" cried Mr. Edmonstone. "I am no fool to be hoodwinked, especially where my little Amy is concerned. I'll see all plain and straight before he says another word of her. But you see what comes of their settling it, while I was out of the way."

Mrs. Edmonstone was grieved to see him so hurt at this. It could not have been helped, and, if all had been smooth, he never would have thought of it again; but it served to keep up his dignity in his own eyes, and, as he fancied, to defend him from Philip's censure, and he therefore made the most of it, which so pained her that she did not venture to continue her championship of Guy.

"Well, well," said Mr. Edmonstone, "the question is what to do next—eh, Philip? I wish he would have spoken openly. I hate mysteries. I'll write and tell him this won't do; he must be explicit—eh, Philip?"

"We will talk it over by and by," said Philip.

His aunt understood that it was to be in her absence, and left the room, fearing it would be impossible to prevent Amy from being distressed, though she had no doubt that Guy would be able to prove his innocence of the charges. She found Amy waiting for her in her room.

"Don't ring, mamma, dear. I'll fasten your dress," said she; then pausing,—"Oh! mamma, I don't know whether I ought to ask, but if you would only tell me if there is nothing gone wrong."

"*I* don't believe there is any thing really wrong, my dear," said Mrs. Edmonstone, kissing her, as she saw how her colour first deepened and then faded.

"Oh! no," said she.

"But there is some mystery about his money matters, which has vexed your papa."

"And what has Philip to do with it?"

"I cannot quite tell, my dear. I believe Margaret Henley has heard something, but I do not know the whole."

"Did you see his letter, mamma?" said Amy, in a low, trembling voice.

"Yes. It is just like himself, and absolutely denies the accusations."

Amy did not say "Then they are false," but she held up her head.

"Then papa is satisfied?" she said.

"I have no doubt all will be made clear in time," said her mother; "but there is still something unexplained, and I am afraid things may not go smoothly just now. I am very sorry, my little Amy, that such a cloud should have come over you," she added, smoothing fondly the long, soft hair, sad at heart to see the cares and griefs of womanhood gathering over her child's bright young life.

"I said I must learn to bear things!" murmured Amy to herself. "Only," and the tears filled her eyes, and she spoke with almost childish simplicity of manner, "I can't bear them

to vex him. I wish Philip would let papa settle it alone. Guy will be angry and grieved afterwards."

They were interrupted by the dinner-bell, but Amy ran into her own room for one moment.

"I said I would learn to bear," said she to herself, "or I shall never be fit for him. Yes, I will, even though it is the thinking he is unhappy. He said I must be his Verena; I know what that means; I ought not to be uneasy, for he will bear it beautifully, and say he is glad of it afterwards. And I will try not to seem cross to Philip.

Mr. Edmonstone was fidgetty and ill at ease, found fault with the dinner, and was pettish with his wife. Mrs. Edmonstone set Philip off upon politics, which lasted till the ladies could escape into the drawing-room. In another minute, Philip brought in Charles, set him down, and departed. Amy, who was standing by the window, resting her forehead against the glass, and gazing into the darkness, turned round hastily, and left the room, but in passing her brother, she put her hand into his, and received a kind pressure. Her mother followed her, and the other three all began to wonder. Charles said he had regularly been turned out of the dining-room by Philip, who announced that he wanted to speak to his uncle, and carried him off.

They conjectured, and were indignant at each other's conjectures, till their mother returned, and gave them as much information as she could; but this only made them very anxious. Charles was certain that Mrs. Henley had laid a cockatrice egg, and Philip was hatching it; and Laura could not trust herself to defend Philip, lest she should do it too vehemently. They could all agree in desire to know the truth, in hopes that Guy was not culpable, and, above all, in feeling for Amy; but by tacit consent they were silent on the three shades of opinion in their minds. Laura was confident that Philip was acting for the best; Mrs. Edmonstone thought he might be mistaken in his premises, but desirous of Guy's real good; and Charles, though sure he would allege nothing which he did not believe to be true, also thought him ready to draw the worst conclusions from small grounds, and to take pleasure in driving Mr. Edmonstone to the most rigorous measures.

Philip, meanwhile, was trying to practise great moderation and forbearance, not bringing forward at first what was most

likely to incense Mr. Edmonstone, and without appearance of animosity in his cool, guarded speech. There was no design in this, he meant only to be just; yet any thing less cool would have had far less effect.

When he shut the dining-room door, he found his uncle wavering, touched by the sight of his little Amy, returning to his first favourable view of Guy's letter, ready to overlook every thing, except the justification, and receive his ward on the same footing as before, though he was at the same time ashamed that Philip should see him relent, and desirous of keeping up his character for firmness, little guessing how his nephew felt his power over him, and knew that he could wield him at will.

Perceiving and pitying his feebleness, and sincerely believing strong measures the only rescue for Amy, the only hope for Guy, Philip found himself obliged to work on him by the production of another letter from his sister. He would rather, if possible, have kept this back, so much did his honourable feeling recoil from what had the air of slander and mischief-making; but he regarded firmness on his uncle's part as the only chance for Guy or for his cousin, and was resolved not to let him swerve from strict justice.

Mrs. Henley had written immediately after Guy's outburst in her house, and, taking it for granted that her brother would receive a challenge, she wrote in the utmost alarm, urging him to remember how precious he was to her, and not to depart from his own principles.

"You would not be so mad as to fight him, eh?" said Mr. Edmonstone, anxiously. "You know better—besides, for poor Amy's sake."

"For the sake of right," replied Philip, "no. I have reassured my sister. I have told her that, let the boy do what he will, he shall never make me guilty of his death."

"You have heard from him, then?"

"No; I suppose a night's reflection convinced him that he had no rational grounds for violent proceedings, and he had sense enough not to expose himself to such an answer as I should have given. What caused his wrath to be directed towards me especially, I cannot tell, nor can my sister," said Philip, looking full at his uncle; "but I seem to have come in for a full share of it."

He proceeded to read the description of Guy's passion and the expressions he had used. Violent as it had been, it did not lose in Mrs. Henley's colouring; and what made the effect worse was, that she had omitted to say she had overheard his language, so that it appeared as if he had been unrestrained even by gentlemanly feeling, and had thus spoken of her brother and uncle in her presence.

Mr. Edmonstone was resentful now, really displeased, and wounded to the quick. The point on which he was especially sensitive was his reputation for sense and judgment; and that Guy, who had shown him so much respect and affection, whom he had treated with invariable kindness, and received into his family like a son, that he should thus speak of him, shocked him extremely. He was too much overcome even to break out into exclamations at first, he only drank off his glass of wine hastily, and said, "I would never have thought it!"

With these words, all desire for forbearance and toleration departed. If Guy could speak thus of him, he was ready to believe any accusation, to think him deceitful from the first, to say he had been trifling with Amy, to imagine him a confirmed reprobate, and cast him off entirely. Philip had some difficulty to restrain him from being too violent, and to keep him to the matter in hand, he defended Guy from the exaggerations of his imagination in a manner which appeared highly noble, considering how Guy had spoken of him. Before they parted that night, another letter had been written, which stood thus,—

"Dear Sir Guy,—Since you refuse the confidence which I have a right to demand, since you elude the explanation I asked, and indulge yourself in speaking in disrespectful terms of me and my family, I have every reason to suppose that you have no desire to continue on the same footing as heretofore at Hollywell. As your guardian, I repeat that I consider myself bound to keep a vigilant watch over your conduct, and if possible to recover you from the unhappy course in which you have involved yourself, but all other intercourse between you and this family must cease.

"Your horse shall be sent to Redclyffe to-morrow.

"Yours faithfully,

"C. Edmonstone."

This letter was more harsh than Philip wished; but Mr. Edmonstone would hardly be prevailed on to consent to enter on no further reproaches. He insisted on banishing Deloraine, as well as on the mention of Guy's disrespect, both against his nephew's opinion; but it was necessary to let him have his own way on these points, and Philip thought himself fortunate in getting a letter written, which was in any degree rational and moderate.

They had been so busy, and Mr. Edmonstone so excited, that Philip thought it best to accept the offer of tea being sent them in the dining-room, and it was not till nearly midnight that their conference broke up, when Mr. Edmonstone found his wife sitting up by the dressing-room fire, having shut Charles's door sorely against his will.

"There," began Mr. Edmonstone, "you may tell Amy she may give him up, and a lucky escape she has had. But this is what comes of settling matters in my absence. So he proceeded with the narration, mixing the facts undistinguishably with his own surmises, and overwhelming his wife with dismay. If a quarter of this was true, defence of Guy was out of the question; and it was still more impossible to wish Amy's attachment to him to continue, and, though much was incredible, it was no time to say so. She could only hope morning would soften her husband's anger, and make matters explicable.

Morning failed to bring her comfort. Mr. Edmonstone repeated that Amy must be ordered to give up all thoughts of Guy, and she perceived that the words ascribed to him stood on evidence which could not be doubted. She could believe he might have spoken them in the first shock of an unjust imputation, and she thought he might have been drawn into some scrape to serve a friend; but she could never suppose him capable of all Mr. Edmonstone imagined.

The first attempt to plead his cause, however, brought on her an angry reply; for Philip, by a hint that she "never saw a fault in Guy," had put it into his uncle's head that she would try to lead him, and made him particularly inaccessible to her influence.

There was no help for it, then; poor little Amy must hear the worst; and it was not long before Mrs. Edmonstone found her waiting in the dressing-room. Between obedience to her husband, her conviction of Guy's innocence, and her tenderness

to her daughter, Mrs. Edmonstone had a hard task, and she could scarcely check her tears as Amy nestled up for her morning kiss.

"O mamma! what is it?"

"Dearest. I told you a cloud was coming. Try to bear it. Your papa is not satisfied with Guy's answer, and it seems he spoke some hasty words of papa and Philip; they have displeased papa very much, and, my dear child, you must try to bear it, he has written to tell Guy he must not think any more of you."

"He has spoken hasty words of papa!" repeated Amy, at if she had not heard the rest. "How sorry he must be!"

As she spoke Charles's door was pushed open, and in he came, half dressed, scrambling on, with but one crutch, to the chair near which she stood, with drooping head and clasped hands.

"Never mind, little Amy," he said, "I'll lay my life 'tis only some monstrous figment of Mrs. Henley's. Trust my word, it will right itself; it is only a rock to keep true love from running too smooth. Come, don't cry," as her tears began to flow fast, "I only meant to cheer you up."

"I am afraid, Charlie," said his mother, putting a force on her own feeling, "it is not the best or kindest way to do her good by telling her to dwell on hopes of him."

"Mamma one of Philip's faction!" exclaimed Charles.

"Of no faction at all, Charles, but I am afraid it is a bad case;" and Mrs. Edmonstone related what she knew; glad to address herself to any one but Amy, who stood still, meanwhile, her hands folded on the back of her brother's chair.

Charles loudly protested that the charges were absurd and preposterous, and would be proved so in no time. He would finish dressing instantly, go to speak to his father, and show him the sense of the thing. Amy heard and hoped, and her mother, who had great confidence in his clear sight, was so cheered as almost to expect that to-day's post might carry a conciliatory letter.

Meantime, Laura and Philip met in the breakfast-room, and in answer to her anxious inquiry, he had given her an account of Guy, which, though harsh enough, was far more comprehensible than what the rest had been able to gather.

She was inexpressibly shocked. "My poor dear little

Amy!" she exclaimed. "O Philip, now I see all you thought to save me from!"

"It is an unhappy business that it ever was permitted!"

"Poor little dear! She was so happy, so very happy and sweet in her humility and her love. Do you know, Philip, I was almost jealous for a moment that all should be so easy for them; and I blamed poverty, but oh! there are worse things than poverty!"

He did not speak, but his dark blue eye softened with the tender look known only to her; and it was one of the precious moments for which she lived. She was happy till the rest came down, and then a heavy cloud seemed to hang on them all breakfast time.

Charles, who found anxiety on Guy's account more exciting, though considerably less agreeable, than he had once expected, would not go away with the womankind; but as soon as the door was shut, exclaimed,

"Now then, Philip, let me know the true grounds of your persecution."

It was not a conciliating commencement. His father was offended, and poured out a confused torrent of Guy's imagined misdeeds, while Philip explained and modified his exaggerations.

"So the fact is," said Charles, at length, "that Guy has asked for his own money, and when in lieu of it he received a letter full of unjust charges, he declared that Philip was a meddling coxcomb. I advise you not to justify his opinion."

Philip disdained to reply; and after a few more of Mr. Edmonstone's exclamations, Charles proceeded,

"This is the great sum total."

"No," said Philip, "I have proof of his gambling."

"What is it?"

"I have shown it to your father, and he is satisfied."

"Is it not proof enough that he is lost to all sense of propriety that he should go and speak in that fashion of us, and to Philip's own sister?" cried Mr. Edmonstone. "What would you have more?"

"That little epithet applied to Captain Morville is hardly, to my mind, proof sufficient that a man is capable of every vice," said Charles, who, in the pleasure of galling his cousin, did not perceive the harm he did his friend's cause, by recalling the affront which his father, at least, felt most deeply

Mr. Edmonstone grew angry with him for disregarding the insulting term applied to himself; and Charles who, though improved in many points, still sometimes showed the effects of early habits of disrespect to his father, answered hastily, that no one could wonder at Guy's resenting such suspicions; he deserved no blame at all, and would have been a blockhead to bear it tamely.

This was more than Charles meant, but his temper was fairly roused, and he said much more than was right or judicious, so that his advocacy only injured the cause. He had many representations to make on the injustice of condemning Guy unheard, of not even laying before him the proofs on which they were built, and on the danger of actually driving him into mischief by shutting the doors of Hollywell against him. "If you wanted to make him all you say he is, you are taking the very best means."

Quite true; but Charles had made his father too angry to pay attention. This stormy discussion continued for nearly two hours, with no effect save inflaming the minds of all parties. At last Mr. Edmonstone was called away; and Charles, rising, declared he should go that moment, and write to tell Guy that there was one person at least still in his senses.

"You will do as you please," said Philip.

"Thank you for the permission," said Charles, proudly.

"It is not to me that your submission is due," said Philip.

"I'll tell you what, Philip, I submit to my own father readily, but I do not submit to Captain Morville's instrument."

"We have had enough of unbecoming retorts for one day," said Philip, quietly, and offering his arm.

Much as Charles disliked it, he was in too great haste not to accept it; and perceiving that there were visitors in the drawing-room, he desired to go up stairs.

"People who always come when they are not wanted!" he muttered, as he went up, pettish with them as with every thing else.

"I do not think you in a fit mood to be advised, Charles," said Philip; "but to free my own conscience, let me say this, Take care how you promote this unfortunate attachment."

"Take care what you say!" exclaimed Charles, flushing with anger, as he threw himself forward, with an impatient

movement, trusting to his crutch rather than retain his cousin's arm; but the crutch slipped, he missed his grasp at the balusters, and would have fallen to the bottom of the flight if Philip had not been close behind. Stretching out his foot he made a barrier, received Charles's weight against his breast, and then, taking him in his arms, carried him up the rest of the way, as easily as if he had been a child. The noise brought Amy out of the dressing-room, much frightened, though she did not speak till Charles was deposited on the sofa, and assured them he was not in the least hurt, but he would hardly thank his cousin for having so dexterously saved him; and Philip, relieved from the fear of his being injured, viewed the adventure as a mere ebullition of ill temper, and went away.

"A fine helpless log am I," exclaimed Charles, as he found himself alone with Amy. "A pretty thing for me to talk of being of any use, when I can't so much as show my anger at an impertinence about my own sister, without being beholden for not breaking my neck to the very piece of presumption that uttered it."

"Oh, don't speak so," began Amy; and at that moment Philip was close to them, set down the crutch that had been dropped, and went, without speaking.

"I don't care who hears," said Charles, "I say there is no greater misery in this world than to have the spirit of a man and the limbs of a cripple. I know if I was good for any thing, things would not long be in this state. I should be at St. Mildred's by this time, at the bottom of the whole story, and Philip would be taught to eat his words in no time, and make as few wry faces as suited his dignity. But what is the use of talking? This sofa"—and he struck his fist against it—"is my prison, and I am a miserable cripple, and it is mere madness in me to think of being attended to."

"O Charlie!" cried Amy, caressingly, and much distressed, "don't talk so. Indeed, I can't bear it! You know it is not so."

"Do I? Have not I been talking myself hoarse, showing up their injustice, saying all a man could say to bring them to reason, and not an inch could I move them. I do believe Philip has driven my father stark mad with these abominable stories of his sister's, which I verily believe she invented herself."

"O no, she could not. Don't say so."

"What? Are you going to believe them too?"

"Never!"

"It is that which drives me beyond all patience," proceeded Charles, "to see Philip lay hold of my father, and twist him about as he chooses, and set every one down with his authority."

"Philip soon goes abroad," said Amy, who could not at the moment say any thing more charitable.

"Ay! there is the hope. My father will return to his natural state, provided they don't drive Guy, in the mean time, to do something desperate."

"No, they won't," whispered Amy.

"Well, give me the blotting-book. I'll write to nim this moment, and tell him we are not all the tools of Philip's malice."

Amy gave the materials to her brother, and then turning away, busied herself in silence as best she might, in the employment her mother had recommended her, of sorting some garden seeds for the cottagers. After an interval, Charles said,

"Well, Amy, what shall I say to him for you?"

There was a little silence, and presently Amy whispered,

"I don't think I ought."

"What?" asked Charles, not catching her very low tones, as she sat behind him, with her head bent down.

"I don't think it would be right," she repeated, more steadily.

"Not right for you to say you don't think him a villain?"

"Papa said I was to have no——" and there her voice was stopped with tears.

"This is absurd, Amy!" said Charles; "when it all was approved at first, and now my father is acting on a wrong impression; what harm can there be in it? Every one would do so."

"I am sure he would not think it right," faltered Amy.

"He? You'll never have any more to say to him, if you don't take care what you are about."

"I can't help it," said Amy, in a broken voice. "It is not right."

"Nonsense! folly!" said Charles. "You are as bad as the rest. When they are persecuting, and slandering, and

acting in the most outrageous way against him, and you know one word of yours would carry him through all, you won't say it, to save him from distraction, and from doing all my father fancies he has done. Then I believe you don't care a rush for him, and never want to see him again, and believe the whole monstrous farrago. I vow I'll say so."

"O Charles, you are very cruel!" said Amy, with an irrepressible burst of weeping.

"Then, if you don't believe it, why can't you send one word to comfort him?"

She wept in silence for some moments; at last she said,—

"It would not comfort him to think me disobedient. He will trust me without, and he will know what you think. You are very kind, dear Charlie; but don't persuade me any more, for I can't bear it. I am going away now; but don't fancy I am angry, only I don't think I can sit by while you write that letter."

Poor little Amy, she seldom knew worse pain than at that moment, when she was obliged to go away to put it out of her power to follow the promptings of her heart to send the few kind words which might prove that nothing could shake her love and trust.

A fresh trial awaited her when she looked from her own window. She saw Deloraine led out, his chestnut neck glossy in the sun, and William prepared for a journey, and the other servants shaking hands, and bidding him good-bye. She saw him ride off, and could hardly help flying back to her brother, to exclaim, "O Charlie, they have sent Deloraine away!" while the longing to send one kind greeting became more earnest than ever; but she withstood it, and throwing herself on the bed, exclaimed,—"He will never come back—never, never!" and gave way unrestrainedly to a fit of weeping; nor was it till this had spent itself that she could collect her thoughts.

She was sitting on the side of her bed, trying to compose herself, when Laura came in.

"My own Amy, my poor dearest,—I am very sorry!"

"Thank you, dear Laura," and Amy gladly rested her aching head on her shoulder.

"I wish I knew what to do for you!" proceeded Laura. "You cannot cease to think about him, and yet you ought."

"If I ought, I suppose I can," said Amy, in a voice exhausted with crying.

"That's right, darling. You will not be weak, and pine for one who is not worthy."

"Not worthy, Laura?" said Amy, withdrawing her arm, and holding up her head.

"Ah! my poor Amy, we thought——"

"Yes; and it is so still. I know it is so. I know he did not do it."

"Then what do you think of Margaret and Philip?"

"There is some mistake."

"And how can you defend what he said of papa?"

"I don't," said Amy, hiding her face, "that is the worst; but I am sure it was only a moment's passion, and that he must be very unhappy about it now. I don't think papa would mind it, at least, not long, if it was not for this other dreadful misapprehension. O Laura! why cannot something be done to clear it up?"

"Every thing will be done," said Laura. "Papa has written to Mr. Wellwood; and Philip means to go and make inquiries at Oxford and St. Mildred's.

"When?" asked Amy.

"Not till term begins. You know he is to have a fortnight's leave, before the regiment goes to Ireland."

"Oh, I hope it will come right then. People must come to an understanding when they meet; it is so different from writing."

"He will do every thing to set things on a right footing. You may be confident of that, Amy, for your sake, as much as any thing else."

"I can't think why he should know I have any thing to do with it," said Amy, blushing. "I had much rather he did not."

"Surely, Amy, you think he can be trusted with your secret; and there is no one who can take more care for you. You *must* look on him as one of ourselves."

Amy made no answer, and Laura was annoyed.

"You are vexed with him for having told this to papa; but that is not reasonable of you, Amy; your better sense must tell you that it is the only truly kind course, both towards Guy and yourself."

It was said in Philip's manner, which, perhaps, made it harder to bear; and Amy, could scarcely answer,—

"He means it for the best."

"You would not have had him be silent?"

"I don't know," said Amy, sadly. "No; he should have done something, but he might have done it more kindly."

Laura endeavoured to persuade her that nothing could have been more kind and judicious, and Amy sat dejectedly owning the good intention, and soothed by the affection of her family; but with the bitter suffering of her heart unallayed, with all her fond, tender feelings torn at the thought of what Guy must be enduring, and with the pain of knowing it was her father's work. She had one comfort, in the certainty that Guy would bear it nobly. She was happy to find her confidence confirmed by her mother and Charles, and one thing she thought she need not give up, though she might no longer think of him as her lover, she might be his Verena still, whether he knew it or not. It could not be wrong to remember any one in her prayers, and to ask that he might not be led into temptation, but have strength to abide patiently. That helped her to feel that he was in the hands of One to whom the secrets of all hearts are known; and a line of poetry seemed to be whispered in her ears, in his own sweet tones,—

"Wait, and the cloud shall roll away."

So, after the first day, she went on pretty well. She was indeed, silent and grave, and no longer the sunbeam of Hollywell; but she took her share in what was passing, and a common observer would hardly have remarked the submissive melancholy of her manner. Her father was very affectionate, and often called her his jewel of good girls; but he was too much afraid of women's tears to talk to her about Guy, he left that to her mother; and Mrs. Edmonstone, having seen her submit to her father's will, was unwilling to say more.

She doubted whether it was judicious to encourage her in dwelling on Guy; for, even supposing his character cleared, they had offended him deeply, and released him from any engagement to her, so that there was nothing to prevent him from forming an attachment elsewhere. Mrs. Edmonstone did not think he would; but it was better to say nothing about him, lest she should not speak prudently, and only keep up the subject in Amy's mind.

Charles stormed and wrangled, told Mr. Edmonstone "he was breaking his daughter's heart, that was all;" and talked of unfairness and injustice, till Mr. Edmonstone vowed it was beyond all bearing, that his own son should call him a tyrant, and accused Guy of destroying all peace in his family.

The replies to the letters came; some thought them satisfactory, and the others wondered that they thought so. Mr. Wellwood gave the highest character of his pupil, and could not imagine how any irregularities could be laid to his charge; but when asked in plain terms how he disposed of his time, could only answer in general, that he had friends and engagements of his own at St. Mildred's and its neighbourhood, and had been several times at Mrs. Henley's and at Colonel Harewood's. The latter place, unfortunately, was the very object of Philip's suspicions; and thus the letter was any thing but an exculpation.

Guy wrote to Charles in the fulness of his heart, expressing gratitude for his confidence and sympathy. He again begged for the supposed evidence of his misconduct, declaring he could explain it, whatever it might be, and proceeded to utter deep regrets for his hasty expressions.

"I do not know what I may have said," he wrote; "I have no doubt it was unpardonable, for I am sure my feelings were so, and that I deserve whatever I have brought on myself. I can only submit to Mr. Edmonstone's sentence, and trust that time will bring to his knowledge that I am innocent of what I am accused of. He has every right to be displeased with me."

Charles pronounced this to be only Guy's way of amusing himself; but his father saw in it a disguised admission of guilt. It was thought, also, to be a bad sign that Guy intended to remain at Southmoor till the end of the vacation, though Charles argued that he must be somewhere; and if they wished to keep him out of mischief, why exile him from Hollywell? He would hardly listen to his mother's representation, that on Amy's account, it would not be right to have him there till the mystery was cleared up.

He tried to stir his father up to go and see Guy at St. Mildred's, and investigate matters for himself; but, though Mr. Edmonstone would have liked the appearance of being important, this failed, because Philip declared it to be unadvisable, knowing that it would be no investigation at all, and

that his uncle would be talked over directly. Next, Charles would have persuaded Philip himself to go, but the arrangements about his leave did not make this convenient; and it was put off till he should pay his farewell visit to his sister, in October. Lastly, Charles wrote to Mrs. Henley, entreating her to give him some information about this mysterious evidence which was wanting; but her reply was a complete "set down" for interference in a matter with which he had no concern.

He was very angry. In fact the post seldom came in without occasioning a fresh dispute, which only had the effect of keeping up the heat of Mr. Edmonstone's displeasure, and making the whole house uncomfortable.

Fretfulness and ill-humour seemed to have taken possession of Charles and his father. Such a state of things had not prevailed since Guy's arrival; Hollywell was hardly like the same house; Mrs. Edmonstone and Laura could do nothing without being grumbled at or scolded by one or other of the gentlemen; even Amy now and then came in for a little petulance on her father's part, and Charles could not always forgive her for saying, in her mournful, submissive tone,—"It is of no use to talk about it."

CHAPTER XVIII.

This just decree alone I know,
Man must be disciplined by woe,
To me, whate'er of good or ill
The future brings, since come it will,
I'll bow my spirit, and be still.
ÆSCHYLUS, (*Anstice's Translation.*)

GUY, in the mean time, was enduring the storm in loneliness, for he was unwilling to explain the cause of his trouble to his companions. The only occasion of the suspicions, which he could think of, was his request for the sum of money; and this he could not mention to Mr. Wellwood, nor was he inclined to make confidants of his other companions, though pleasant, right-minded youths.

He had only announced that he had had a letter which had grieved him considerably, but of which he could not mention the contents; and, as Harry Graham, who knew something of the Broadstone neighbourhood, had picked up a report that Sir Guy Morville was to marry Lady Eveleen de Courcy, there was an idea among the party that there was some trouble in the way of his attachment. He had once before been made, by some joke, to colour and look conscious; and now this protected him from inconvenient questions, and accounted for his depression. He was like what he had been on first coming to Hollywell—grave and silent, falling into reveries when others were talking, and much given to long, lonely wanderings. Accustomed as he had been in boyhood to a solitary life in beautiful scenery, there was something in a fine landscape that was to him like a friend and companion; and he sometimes felt that it would have been worse if he had been in a dull, uniform country, instead of among mountain

peaks and broad wooded valleys. Working hard, too, helped him not a little, and conic sections served him almost as well as they served Laura.

A more real help was the neighbourhood of Stylehurst. On the first Sunday after receiving Mr. Edmonstone's letter, he went to church there, instead of with the others, to St. Mildred's. They thought it was for the sake of the solitary walk, but he had other reasons for the preference. In the first place, it was a Communion Sunday, and in the next, he could feel more kindly towards Philip there, and he knew he needed all that could strengthen such a disposition.

Many a question did he ask himself, to certify whether he wilfully entertained malice, or hatred, or any uncharitableness. It was a long, difficult examination; but at its close, he felt convinced that, if such passions knocked at the door of his heart, it was not at his own summons, and that he drove them away without listening to them. And surely he might approach to gain the best aid in that battle, especially as he was certain of his strong and deep repentance for his fit of passion, and longing earnestly for the pledge of forgiveness.

The pardon and peace he sought came to him, and in such sort that the comfort of that day, when fresh from the first shock, and waiting in suspense for some new blow, was such as never to be forgotten. They linked themselves with the grave shade of the clustered grey columns, and the angel heads on the roof of that old church; with the long grass and tall yellow mullens among its churchyard graves, and with the tints of the elm-trees that closed it in, their leaves in masses either of green or yellow, and opening here and there to show the purple hills beyond.

He wandered in the churchyard between the services. All enmity to Philip was absent now; and he felt as if it would hardly return when he stood by the graves of the Archdeacon and of the two Frances Morvilles, and thought what that spot was to his cousin. There were a few flowers planted round Mrs. Morville's grave, but they showed that they had long been neglected, and no such signs of care marked her daughter Fanny's. And when Guy further thought of Mrs. Henley, and recollected how Philip had sacrificed all his cherished prospects and hopes of distinction, and embraced an irksome profession, for the sake of these two sisters, he did not find it

difficult to excuse the sternness, severity, and distrust, which were an evidence how acutely a warm heart had suffered.

Though he suffered cruelly from being cut off from Amy, yet his reverence for her helped him to submit. He had always felt as if she was too far above him; and though he had, beyond his hopes, been allowed to aspire to the thought of her, it was on trial, and his failure, his return to his old evil passions, had sunk him beneath her. He shuddered to think of her being united to any thing so unlike herself, and which might cause her so much misery; it was wretchedness to think that even now she might be suffering for him; and yet not for worlds would he have lost the belief that she was so feeling, or the remembrance of the looks which had shone on him so sweetly and timidly as she sat at her mother's feet; though that remembrance was only another form of misery. But Amy would be tranquil, pure, and good, whatever became of him, and he should always be able to think of her, looking like one of those peaceful spirits, with bending head, folded hands, and a star on its brow, in the *Paradiso* of Flaxman. Her serenity would be untouched; and though she might be lost to him, he could still be content while he could look up at it through his turbid life. Better she were lost to him than that her peace should be injured.

He still, of course, earnestly hoped to prove his innocence, though his hopes lessened; for, as long as the evidence was withheld, he had no chance. After writing as strongly as he could, he could do no more except watch for something that might unravel the mystery; and Charles's warm sympathy and readiness to assist him were a great comfort.

He had not seen his uncle again; perhaps Sebastian was ashamed to meet him after their last encounter, and was still absent on his engagement; but the wife and child were still at St. Mildred's, and one afternoon, when Guy had rather unwillingly gone thither with Mr. Wellwood, he saw Mrs. Dixon sitting on one of the benches which were placed on the paths cut out on the side of the hill, looking very smart and smiling, among several persons of her own class.

To be ashamed to recognise her was a weakness beneath him; he spoke to her, and was leaving her, pluming herself on his notice, when he saw little Marianne's blue eyes fixed wistfully upon him, and held out his hand to her. She ran up to him joyfully, and he led her a few steps from her

mother's party. "Well, little one, how are you? I have your piece of spar quite safe. Have you said how d'ye do to Bustle?"

"Bustle! Bustle!" called the soft voice; but it needed a whistle from his master to bring him to be caressed by the little girl.

"Have you been taking any more pleasant walks?"

"Oh yes. We have been all round these pretty paths. And I should like to get to the top of this great high hill, and see all round; but mamma says she has got a bone in her leg, and cannot go."

"Do you think mamma would give you leave to go up with me? Should you like it?"

She coloured all over, too happy even to thank him.

"Then," said Guy, to his tutor, "I will meet you here when you have done your business in the town, in an hour or so. Poor little thing, she has not many pleasures."

Mrs. Dixon made no difficulty, and was so profuse in thanks that Guy got out of her way as fast as he could, and was soon on the soft thymy grass of the hill-side, the little girl frisking about him in great delight, playing with Bustle, and chatting merrily.

Little Marianne was a delicate child, and her frolics did not last long. As the ascent became steeper, her breath grew shorter, and she toiled on in a resolute uncomplaining manner after his long, vigorous steps, till he looked round, and seeing her, panting far behind, turned to help her, lead her, and carry her, till the top was achieved, and the little girl stood on the topmost stone, gazing round at the broad sunny landscape, with the soft green meadows, the harvest fields, the woods in their gorgeous autumn raiment, and the moorland on the other side, with its other peaks and cairns, brown with withered bracken, and shadowed in moving patches by the floating clouds. The exhilarating wind brought a colour into her pale cheeks, and her flossy curls were blowing over her face.

He watched her in silence, pleased and curious to observe how so beautiful a scene struck the childish eye of the little Londoner. The first thing she said, after three or four minutes contemplation—a long time for such a child—was, "Oh! I never saw any thing so pretty!" then presently after, "Oh! I wish little brother Felix was here!"

"This is a pleasant place to think about your little brother," said Guy, kindly; and she looked up in his face, and exclaimed, "Oh! do you know about Felix?"

"You shall tell me," said Guy. "Here, sit on my knee and rest after your scramble."

"Mamma never lets me talk of Felix, because it makes her cry," said Marianne; "but I wish it sometimes."

Her little heart was soon open. It appeared that Felix was the last who had died, the nearest in age to Marianne, and her favourite playfellow. She told of some of their sports in their London home, speaking of them with eagerness and fondness, that showed, what joys they had been, though to Guy they seemed but the very proof of dreariness and dinginess. She talked of walks to school, when Felix would tell what he would do when he was a man, and how he took care of her at the crossings, and how rude boys used to drive them, and how they would look in at the shop windows and settle what they would buy if they were rich. Then she talked of his being ill—ill so very long, how he sat in his little chair, and could not play, and then always lay in bed, and she liked to sit by him there; but at last he died, and they carried him away in a great black coffin, and he would never come back again. But it was so dull now, there was no one to play with her.

Though the little girl did not cry, she looked very mournful, and Guy tried to comfort her, but she did not understand him. "Going to heaven" only conveyed to her a notion of death and separation; and this phrase, together with a vague idea who had made her, and that she ought to be good, seemed to be the extent of the poor child's religious knowledge. She hardly ever had been at church; and though she had read one or two Bible stories, it seemed to have been from their having been used as lessons at school. She had a dim notion that good people read the Bible, and there was one on the little table at home, with the shell-turkey-cock standing upon it, and mamma read it when Felix did; but it was a big book, and the shell-turkey-cock always stood upon it; in short, it seemed only connected with mamma's tears and the loss of her brother.

Guy was very much shocked, and so deep in thought that he could hardly talk to the child in their progress down the hill; but she was just so tired as to be inclined to silence, and quite happy clinging to his hand, till he delivered her over to

her mother at the foot of the hill, and went to join his tutor, at the place appointed.

"Wellwood," said he, breaking silence, when they had walked about half way back to the farm, "do you think your cousin would do me a great kindness? You saw that child? Well, if the parents consent, it would be the greatest charity on earth if Miss Wellwood would receive her into her school."

"On what terms? What sort of an education is she to have?"

"The chief thing she wants is to be taught Christianity, poor child; the rest Miss Wellwood may settle. She is my first cousin. I don't know whether you are acquainted with our family history?" and he went on to explain as much as was needful. It ended in a resolution that if Miss Wellwood would undertake the charge, the proposal should be made to Mrs. Dixon.

It was a way of assisting his relations likely to do real good, and on the other hand, he would be able, under colour of the payment for the child, to further Miss Wellwood's schemes, and give her the interest of the thousand pounds, until his five and twentieth year might put his property in his own power.

Miss Wellwood readily consented, much pleased with the simplicity and absence of false shame he showed in the whole transaction, and very anxious for the good of a child in a class so difficult to reach. He next went to Mrs. Dixon, expecting more difficulty with her, but he found none. She thought it better Marianne should live at St. Mildred's than die in London, and was ready to catch at the prospect of her being fitted for a governess. Indeed, she was so strongly persuaded that the rich cousin might make Marianne's fortune, that she would have been very unwilling to interfere with the fancy he had taken for her.

Little Marianne was divided between fear of leaving mamma and liking for St. Mildred's, but her first interview with Miss Wellwood, and Miss Jane's showing her a little white bed, quite turned the scale in their favour. Before the time came for Guy's return to Oxford, he had seen her settled, heard her own account of her happy life, and had listened to Miss Jane Wellwood's delight in her sweet temper and good disposition.

Those thousand pounds; Guy considered again and again

whether he could explain their destination, and whether this would clear him. It seemed to him only a minor charge, and besides his repugnance to mention such a design, he saw too many obstacles in his way. Captain Morville and his sister were the very persons from whom Miss Wellwood's project was to be kept secret. Besides, what would be gained? It was evident that Guy's own assertions were doubted, and he could bring no confirmation of them; he had never spoken of his intention to his tutor, and Mr. Wellwood could, therefore, say nothing in his favour. If Mr. Edmonstone alone had been concerned, or if this had been the only accusation, Guy might have tried to explain it; but with Philip he knew it would be useless, and therefore would not enter on the subject. He could only wait patiently.

CHAPTER XIX.

> Most delicately, hour by hour,
> He canvassed human mysteries,
> And stood aloof from other minds.
> Himself unto himself he sold,
> Upon himself, himself did feed,
> Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
> With chiselled features clear and sleek.
>
> TENNYSON.

GUY had been about a week at Oxford, when one evening, as he was sitting alone in his rooms, he received an unexpected visit from Captain Morville. He was glad, for he thought a personal interview would remove all misconstructions, and held out his hand cordially, saying:

"You here, Philip? When did you come?"

"Half an hour ago. I am on my way to spend a week with the Thorndales. I go on to-morrow to my sister's."

While speaking, Philip was surveying the apartment, for he held that a man's room is generally an indication of his disposition, and assuredly there was a great deal of character in his own, with the scrupulous neatness and fastidious taste of its arrangements. Here, he thought, he could not fail to see traces of his cousin's habits, but he was obliged to confess to himself that there was very little to guide him. The furniture was strictly as its former occupant had left it, only rather the worse for wear, and far from being in order. The chairs were so heaped with books and papers, that Guy had to make a clearance of one before his visitor could sit down; but there was nothing else to complain of, not even a trace of cigars; but knowing him to be a great reader and lover of accomplishments, Philip wondered that the only decorations were Laura's drawing of Sintram, and a little print of Red-

clyffe; and the books were chiefly such as were wanted for his studies, the few others having for the most part the air of old library books, as if he had sent for them from Redclyffe. Was this another proof that he had some way of frittering away his money with nothing to show for it? A Sophocles and a lexicon were open before him on the table, and a blotting book, which he closed, but not before Philip had caught sight of what looked like verses.

Neither did his countenance answer Philip's expectations. It had not his usual bright lively expression; there was a sadness which made his smile like a gleam on a showery day, instead of constant sunshine; but there was neither embarrassment nor defiance, and the gleamlike smile was there, as, with a frank, confiding tone, he said:

"This is very kind of you, to come and see what you can do for me."

Philip was by no means prepared to be thus met halfway, but he thought Guy wanted to secure him as an intercessor, and hardened himself into righteous severity.

"No one can be more willing to help you than I, but you must, in the first place, help yourself."

Instantly, the sedate measured tone made Guy's heart and head throb with impatience, awakening all the former memories so hardly battled down; but with the impulse of anger came the thought, "Here it is again! If I don't keep it down now, I am undone! The enemy will seize me again!" He forced himself not to interrupt, while Philip went calmly on.

"While you are not open, nothing can be done."

"My only wish, my only desire, is to be open," said Guy, speaking fast and low, and repressing the feeling, which, nevertheless, affected his voice; "but the opportunity of explanation has never been given me."

"You need complain of that no longer. I am here to convey to my uncle any explanation you may wish to address to him. I will do my best to induce him to attend to it favourably, but he is deeply offended and hurt by what has passed."

"I know, I know," said Guy, colouring deeply, and all irritation disappearing from voice and manner; "I know there is no excuse for me. I can only repeat that I am heartily sorry for whatever I may have said, either of him or of you."

"Of course," returned Philip. "I should never think of

resenting what you may have said in a moment of irritation, especially as you express regret for it. Consider it as entirely overlooked on my part."

Guy was nearly choked in uttering a "Thank you," which did not sound, after all, much like acceptance of forgiveness.

"Now to the real matter at issue," said Philip; "the application for the money, which so amazed Mr. Edmonstone."

"I do not see that it is the point," said Guy; "I wanted it for a scheme of my own; he did not think fit to let me have it, so there is an end of the matter."

"Mr. Edmonstone does not think so. He wishes to be convinced that you have not spent it beforehand."

"What would you have beyond my word and honour that I have not?" exclaimed Guy.

"Far be it from me to say that he doubts it," said Philip; and as at those words the flash of the Morville eye darted lightning, he expected that the next moment, "Do you?" would be thundered forth, and he could not, with truth, answer "No;" but it was one of his maxims that a man need never be forced into an open quarrel, and he tranquilly continued: "but it is better not to depend entirely on assertion. Why do you not bring him full proofs of your good intention, and thus restore yourself to his confidence?"

"I have said that I am bound not to mention the purpose."

"Unfortunate!" said Philip; then, while Guy bit his lip till it bled, the pain really a relief, by giving some vent to his anger at the implied doubt, he went on: "If it is impossible to clear this up, the next advice I would give is, that you should show what your expenditure has been; lay your accounts before him, and let them justify you."

Most people would have resented this as an impertinent proposal, were it only that doing so would have served to conceal the awkward fact that the accounts had not been kept at all. Guy had never been taught to regard exactness in this respect as a duty, had no natural taste for precision, and did not feel responsible to any person; nor, if he had kept any, could he have shown them, without exposing his uncle. To refuse would, however, be a subterfuge, and after a moment, he made an effort, and confessed he had none to show; though

he knew Philip would despise him for it as a fool, and probably take it as positive evidence against him.

It would have been more bearable if Philip would but have said, "How foolish!" instead of drily repeating, "Unfortunate."

After a pause, during which Guy was not sufficiently master of himself to speak, Philip added—"Then this matter of the thousand pounds is to be passed over? You have no explanation to offer?"

"No:" and again he paused. 'When my word is not accepted, I have no more to say. But this is not the point. What I would know is, what are the calumnies that accuse me of having gamed? If you really wish to do me a service, you will give me an opportunity of answering these precious proofs."

"I will," answered Philip; who could venture on doing so himself, though for his sister's sake it was unsafe to trust Mr. Edmonstone, with whom what was not an absolute secret was not a secret at all. "My uncle knows that a thirty pound cheque of his, in your name, was paid by you to a notorious gamester."

Guy did not shrink, as he simply answered—"It is true."

"Yet you have neither played, nor betted, nor done any thing that could come under the definition of gambling?"

"No."

"Then why this payment?"

"I cannot explain that. I know appearances are against me," replied Guy, steadily, and with less irritation than he had hitherto shown. "I once thought my simple word would have sufficed; but since it seems that will not do, I will not again make what you call assertions."

"In fact, while you profess a desire to be open and sincere, a mystery appears at every turn. What would you have us do?"

"As you think fit," he answered proudly.

Philip had been used to feel men's wills and characters bend and give way beneath his superior force of mind. They might, like Charles, chafe and rage, but his calmness always gave him the ascendant almost without exertion, and few people had ever come in contact with him without a certain submission of will or opinion. With Guy alone it was not so

he had been sensible of it once or twice before; he had no mastery, and could no more bend that spirit than a bar of steel. This he could not bear, for it obliged him to be continually making efforts to preserve his own sense of superiority.

"Since this is your ultimatum," he said—"since you deny your confidence, and refuse any reply to these charges, you have no right to complain of suspicion. I shall do my best, both as your true friend, and as acting with your guardian's authority, to discover all that may lead to the elucidation of the mystery. In the first place, I am desired to make every inquiry here as to your conduct and expenditure. I hope they will prove satisfactory."

"I am very much obliged to you," answered Guy, his voice stern and dignified; and the smile that curled his lip was like Philip's own.

Philip was positively annoyed, and desirous to say something to put him down, but he had not committed himself by any vehemence, and Philip was too cool and wise to compromise his own dignity; so he rose to go, saying, "Good night! I am sorry I cannot induce you to act in the only way that can right you."

"Good night!" replied Guy, in the same dignified manner in which he had spoken ever since his passion had been surmounted.

They parted, each feeling that matters were just where they were before. Philip went back to his inn, moralizing on the pride and perverseness which made it impossible to make any impression on a Redclyffe Morville, whom not even the fear of detection could lead to submission.

Next morning, while Philip was hastily breakfasting, the door opened, and Guy entered, pale and disturbed, as if he had been awake all night.

"Philip!" said he, in his frank natural voice, "I don't think we parted last night as your good intentions deserved."

"O, ho!" thought Philip, "the fear of an investigation has brought him to reason; and he said, "Well, I am very glad you see things in a truer light this morning;" then asked if he had breakfasted. He had; and his cousin added,

"Have you any thing to say on the matter we discussed last night?"

"No. I can only repeat that I am not guilty, and wait for time to show my innocence. I only came to see you once more, that I might feel that we parted friends."

"I shall always hope to be a *true* friend."

"I did not come here for altercation," said Guy (an answer rather to the spirit than to the words), "so I will say no more. If you wish to see me again, you will find me in my rooms. Good bye."

Philip was puzzled. He wondered whether Guy had come wishing to propitiate him, but had found pride indomitable at the last moment; or whether he had been showing himself too severely just to admit entreaty. He would be able to judge better after he had made his inquiries, and he proceeded with them at once. He met with no such replies as he expected. Every one spoke of Sir Guy Morville in high terms, strict in his habits of application, and irreproachable in conduct. He was generally liked, and some regret was expressed that he lived in so secluded a manner, forming so few intimacies: but no one seemed to think it possible that any thing wrong could be imputed to him. Philip could even perceive that there was some surprise that such inquiries should be made at all, especially by so young a man as himself. Mr. Wellwood, the person whom he most wished to see, was not at Oxford, but was at home preparing for his ordination.

Nor could Philip get nearer to the solution of the mystery when he went to the tradesmen, who were evidently as much surprised as the tutors, and said he always paid in ready money. Captain Morville felt like a lawyer whose case is breaking down, no discoveries made, nothing done; but he was not one whit convinced of his cousin's innocence, thinking the college authorities blind and careless, and the tradesmen combined to conceal their extortions, or else that the mischief had been done at St. Mildred's. He was particularly provoked when he remembered Guy's invitation to him to come to his rooms, knowing, as he must have done, what would be the result of the inquiry.

Philip was conscious that it would have been kind to have gone to say that, so far, he had found nothing amiss, but he did not like giving Guy this passing triumph. It made no difference in his real opinion; and why renew a useless discussion? He persuaded himself that he had left himself no time,

and should miss the train, and hastened off to the station, where he had to wait a quarter of an hour, consoling himself with reflecting—

"After all, though I might have gone to him, it would have been useless. He is very obstinate, and occasions of irritating his unfortunate temper are above all to be avoided."

One short year after, what would not Philip have given for that quarter of an hour!

By six o'clock he was at St. Mildred's, greeted with delight by his sister, and with cordiality by Dr. Henley. They were both proud of him, and every tender feeling his sister had, was for Philip, her pet and her pupil in his childhood, and her most valued companion and counsellor through her early womanhood.

She had a picked dinner-party to meet him, for she knew the doctor's conversation was not exactly the thing to entertain him through a whole evening, and the guests might well think they had never seen a handsomer or more clever brother and sister than Mrs. Henley and Captain Morville. The old county families, if they did wonder at her marriage, were always glad to meet her brother, and it was a great pleasure to him to see old friends.

Only once did his sister, in the course of the evening, make him feel the difference of their sentiments, and that was about Miss Wellwood. Philip defended her warmly; and when he heard that there was a plan getting up for excluding her from the hospital, he expressed strong disapprobation at the time; and after the guests were gone, spoke upon the subject with his sister and her husband. The doctor entered into no party questions, and had only been stirred up to the opposition by his wife; he owned that the Miss Wellwoods had done a great deal of good, and made the nurses do their duty better than he had ever known, and was quite ready to withdraw his opposition. Mrs. Henley argued about opinions, but Philip was a match for her in her own line; and the end of it was, that though she would not allow herself to be convinced, and shook her head at her brother's way of thinking, he knew he had prevailed, and that Miss Wellwood would be unmolested.

There was not another person in the world to whom Margaret would have yielded; and it served to restore him

to the sense of universal dominion which had been a little shaken by his conversation with Guy.

"Sir Guy was a great deal with the Wellwoods," said Mrs. Henley.

"Was he, indeed?"

"O you need not think of *that*. It would be too absurd. The youngest must be twice his age."

"I was not thinking of any such thing," said Philip, smiling as he thought of the very different course Guy's affections had taken.

"I did hear he was to marry Lady Eveleen de Courcy. Is there any thing in that report?"

"No, certainly not."

"I should pity the woman who married him, after the specimen I saw of his temper."

"Poor boy!" said Philip.

"Lady Eveleen has been a great deal at Hollywell, has she not? I rather wondered my aunt should like to have her there, considering all things."

"What things, sister?"

"Considering what a catch he would be for one of the Edmonstone girls."

"I thought you had just been pitying the woman who should marry him. Perhaps my aunt had Lady Eveleen there to act as a screen for her own daughters."

"That our good-natured aunt should have acted with such ultra-prudence!" said Margaret, laughing at his grave, ironical tone. "Lady Eveleen is very pretty, is she not? A mere beauty, I believe?"

"Just so; she is much admired; but Guy is certainly not inclined to fall in love with her."

"I should have thought him the very man to fall in love young, like his father. Do you think there is any chance for either of the Edmonstones? Laura's beauty he spoke of, but it was not in a very lover-like way. Do you admire Laura so much?"

"She is very pretty."

"And little Amy?"

"She is a mere child, and will hardly ever be any thing more; but she is a very good little amiable thing."

"I wish poor Charles's temper was improved."

"So do I; but it is very far from improvement at present,

in consequence of his zeal for Guy. Guy has been very attentive and good-natured to him, and has quite won his heart; so that I should positively honour him for his championship if it was not in great degree out of opposition to his father and myself. To-morrow, Margaret, you must give me some guide to the most probable quarters for learning any thing respecting this poor boy's follies."

Mrs. Henley did her best in that way, and Philip followed up his inquiries with great ardour, but still unsuccessfully. Jack White, the hero of the draft, was not at St. Mildred's, nor likely to be heard of again till the next races; and whether Sir Guy had been on the race-ground at all was a doubtful point. Next, Philip walked to Stylehurst, to call on Colonel Harewood, and see if he could learn any thing in conversation with him; but the Colonel did not seem to know any thing, and his sons were not at home. Young Morville was, he thought, a spirited lad, very good-natured; he had been out shooting once or twice with Tom, and had a very fine spaniel. If he had been at the races, the Colonel did not know it; he had had some thoughts of asking him to join their party, but had been prevented.

This was no reason, thought Philip, why Guy might not have been with Tom Harewood without the Colonel's knowledge. Tom was just the man to lead him amongst those who were given to betting; he might have been drawn in, and, perhaps, he had given some pledge of payment when he was of age, or, possibly, obtained an immediate supply of money from the old steward at Redclyffe, who was devotedly attached to him. If so, Philip trusted to be able to detect it from the accounts; on the other supposition, there was no hope of discovery.

The conversation with Colonel Harewood kept him so late that he had no time for going, as usual, to his old haunts, at Stylehurst; nor did he feel inclined just then to revive the saddening reflections they excited. He spent the evening in talking over books with his sister, and the next day proceeded on his journey to Thorndale Park.

This was one of the places where he was always the most welcome, ever since he had been a school-boy, received in a way especially flattering, considering that the friendship was entirely owing to the uncompromising good sense and real

kindness with which he had kept in order the follies of his former fag.

Charles might laugh, and call them the young man and young man's companion, and Guy more classically term them the pious Æneas and his fidus Achates, but it was a friendship that did honour to both; and the value that the Thorndales set upon Captain Morville was not misplaced, and scarcely overrated. Not particularly clever themselves, they the more highly appreciated his endowments, and were proud that "James" had been able to make such a friend; for they knew, as well as the rest of the world, that Captain Morville was far from seeking the acquaintance for the sake of their situation in life, but that it was from real liking and esteem. How far this esteem was gained by the deference the whole family paid to his opinion, was another question; at any rate, the courting was from them.

The Miss Thorndales deemed Captain Morville the supreme authority in drawing, literature, and ecclesiastical architecture; and whenever a person came in their way who was thought handsome, always pronounced that he was not by any means equal to James's friend. Lady Thorndale delighted to talk over James with him, and thank him for his kindness; and Lord Thorndale, rather a pompous man himself, liked his somewhat stately manners, and talked politics with him, sincerely wishing he was his neighbour at Redclyffe, and calculating how much good he would do there. Philip listened with interest to accounts of how the Thorndale and Morville influence had always divided the borough of Moorworth, and, if united, might dispose of it at will, and returned evasive answers to questions what the young heir of Redclyffe might be likely to do.

James Thorndale drove his friend to Redclyffe, as Philip had authority from Mr. Edmonstone to transact any business that might be required with Markham, the steward; and, as has been said before, he expected to discover in the accounts something that might explain why Guy had ceased to press for the thousand pounds. However, he could find nothing amiss in them, though—bearing in mind that it is less easy to detect the loss of a score of sheep than of one—he subjected them to a scrutiny which seemed by no means agreeable to the gruff old grumbling steward. He also walked about the park, saw to the marking of certain trees that were injur-

ing each other; and finding that there was a misunderstanding between Markham and the new rector, Mr. Ashford, about certain parish matters, where the clergyman was certainly right, he bore down Markham's opposition with Mr. Edmonstone's weight, and felt he was doing good service.

He paused at the gate, and looked back at the wide domain and fine old house. He pitied them, and the simple-hearted, honest tenantry, for being the heritage of such a family, and the possession of one so likely to misuse them, instead of training them into the means of conferring benefits on them, on his country. What would not Philip himself do if those lands were his,—just what was needed to give his talents free scope? and what would it be to see his beautiful Laura their mistress?

CHAPTER XX.

> The longing for ignoble things,
> The strife for triumph more than truth,
> The hardening of the heart, that brings
> Irreverence for the dreams of youth.
>
> LONGFELLOW.

AFTER his week at Thorndale Park, Captain Morville returned to make his farewell visit at Hollywell, before joining his regiment at Cork, whence it was to sail for the Mediterranean. He reckoned much on this visit, for not even Laura herself could fathom the depth of his affection for her, strengthening in the recesses where he so sternly concealed it, and viewing her ever as more faultless since she had been his own. While she was his noble, strong-minded, generous, fond Laura, he could bear with his disappointment in his sister, with the loss of his home, and with the trials that had made him a grave, severe man. She had proved the strength of her mind by the self-command he had taught her, and for which he was especially grateful to her, as it made him safer and more unconstrained, able to venture on more demonstration than in those early days when every look had made her blush and tremble.

Mr. Edmonstone brought the carriage to fetch him from the station, and quickly began,—

"I suppose, as you have not written, you have found nothing out?"

"Nothing."

"And you could do nothing with him. Eh?"

"No; I could not get a word of explanation, nor break through the fence of pride and reserve. I must do him the justice to say that he bears the best of characters at

Oxford; and if there were any debts I could not get at them from the tradesmen."

"Well, well, say no more about it; he is an ungrateful young dog, and I am sick of it. I only wish that I could wash my hands of him altogether. It was mere folly to expect any of that set could ever come to good. There's every thing going wrong all at once now; poor little Amy breaking her heart after him, and worse than all, there's poor Charlie laid up again," said Mr. Edmonstone, one of the most affectionate people in the world; but his maundering mood making him speak of Charles's illness as if he only regarded it as an additional provocation for himself.

"Charles ill!" exclaimed Philip.

"Yes; another of those formations in the joint. I hoped and trusted that was all over now; but he is as bad as ever, —has not been able to move for a week, and goodness knows when he will again."

"Indeed! I am very sorry. Is there as much pain as before?"

"Oh, yes. He has not slept a wink these four nights. Mayerne talks of opium; but he says he won't have it till he has seen you, he is so anxious about this unlucky business. If any thing could persuade me to have Guy back again, it would be that this eternal fretting after him is so bad for poor Charlie."

"It is on Amy's account that it is impossible to have him here," said Philip.

"Ay! He shall never set eyes on Amy again unless all this is cleared up, which it never will be, as I desire mamma to tell her. By the by, Philip, Amy said something of your having a slip with Charles on the stairs."

"There was very nearly an accident; but I believed he was not hurt. I hope it has nothing to do with this illness?"

"He says it was all his own fault," said Mr. Edmonstone, "and that he should have been actually down but for you."

"But is it really thought it can have caused this attack?"

"I can hardly suppose so; but Thompson fancies there may have been some jar. However, don't distress yourself, I dare say it would have come on all the same."

Philip did not like to be forgiven by Mr. Edmonstone, and there was something very annoying in having this mischance connected with his name, though without his fault;

nor did he wish Charles to have the kind of advantage over him that might be derived from seeming to pass over his share in the misfortune.

When they arrived at Hollywell, it was twilight, but no one was in the drawing-room, generally so cheerful at that time of day; the fire had lately been smothered with coals, and looked gloomy and desolate. Mr. Edmonstone left Philip there, and ran up to see how Charles was, and soon after Laura came in, sprang to his side, and held his hand in both hers.

"You bring no good news?" said she, sadly, as she read the answer in his face. "Oh! how I wish you had. It would be such a comfort now. You have heard about poor Charlie?"

"Yes; and very sorry I am. But, Laura, is it really thought that accident could have occasioned it?"

"Dr. Mayerne does not think so, only Mr. Thompson talked of remote causes, when Amy mentioned it. I don't believe it did any harm, and Charlie himself says you saved him from falling down-stairs."

Philip had begun to give Laura his version of the accident, as he had already done to her father, when Mrs. Edmonstone came down, looking harassed and anxious. She told her nephew that Charles was very desirous to see him, and sent him up at once.

There was a fire in the dressing-room, and the door was open into the little room, which was only lighted by a lamp on a small table, where Amy was sitting at work. After After shaking hands, she went away, leaving him alone with Charles, who lay in his narrow bed against the wall, fixed in one position, his forehead contracted with pain, his eyelids red and heavy from sleeplessness, his eyes very quick and eager, and his hands and arms thrown restlessly outside the coverings.

"I am very sorry to find you here," said Philip, coming up to him, and taking, rather than receiving, his hot, limp hand. "Is the pain very bad?"

"That is a matter of course," said Charles, in a sharp, quick manner, his voice full of suffering. "I want to hear what you have been doing at Oxford and St. Mildred's."

"I am sorry I do not bring the tidings you wish."

"I did not expect you would. I know you too well; but

I want to hear what you have been doing—what he said, answered Charles, in short, impatient sentences.

"It can be of no use, Charlie. You are not in a state to enter on agitating subjects."

"I tell you I will hear all," returned Charles, with increased asperity. "I know you will say nothing to his advantage that you can help, but still I know you will speak what you think the truth, and I want to judge for myself."

"You speak as if I was not acting for his good."

"Palaver!" cried Charles, fully sensible of the advantage his illness gave him. "I want the facts. Begin at the beginning. Sit down—there's a chair by you. Now tell me, where did you find him?"

Philip could not set Charles down in his present state, and was obliged to submit to a cross-examination, in which he showed no abatement of his natural acuteness, and, unsparing as he always was, laid himself under no restraint at all. Philip was compelled to give a full history of his researches; and if he had afforded no triumph to Guy, Charles revenged him.

"Pray, what did Guy say when he heard the result of this fine voyage of discovery?"

"I did not see him again."

"Not see him! not tell him he was so far justified?"

"I had no time—at least I thought not. It would have been useless, for while these mysteries continue, my opinion is unchanged, and there was no benefit in renewing vain disputes."

"Say no more!" exclaimed Charles. "You have said all I expected, and more too. I gave you credit for domineering and prejudice, now I see it is malignity."

As he spoke, Laura entered from the dressing-room, and stood aghast at the words, then looked imploringly at her cousin. Dr. Mayerne was following her, and Charles called out,—

"Now, doctor, give me as much opium as you please. I only want to be stupified till the world has turned round, and then you may wake me."

Philip shook hands with Dr. Mayerne, and, without betraying a shade of annoyance, wished Charles good-night, but Charles had drawn the coverings over his head, and would not hear him.

"Poor fellow!" said Philip to Laura when they were out of the room. "He is a very generous partizan, and excitement and suffering make him carry his zeal to excess."

"I knew you could not be angry with him."

"I could not be angry at this time at far more provocation given by any one belonging to you, Laura."

Laura's heart had that sensation which the French call *se serrer*, as she heard him allude to the long separation to which there seemed no limit; but they could say no more.

"Amy," said Charles, when she returned to him after dinner, "I am more than ever convinced that things will right themselves. I never saw prejudice more at fault."

"Did he tell you all about it?"

"I worked out of him all I could, and it is my belief Guy had the best of it. I only wonder he did not horsewhip Philip round the quadrangle. I wish he had."

"Oh, no, no! But he controlled himself?"

"If he had not we should have heard of it fast enough;" and Charles told what he had been able to gather, while she sat by, divided between joy and pain.

Philip saw very little more of Charles. He used to come to ask him how he was once a-day, but never received any encouragement to lengthen his visit. These gatherings in the diseased joint were always excessively painful, and were very long in coming to the worst, as well as afterwards in healing, and through the week of Philip's stay at Hollywell, Charles was either in a state of great suffering, or else heavy and confused with opiates. His mother's whole time and thoughts were absorbed in him; she attended to him day and night, and could hardly spare a moment for any thing else. Indeed, with all her affection and anxiety for the young lovers, Charles was so entirely her engrossing object, that her first feeling of disappointment at the failure of Philip's journey of investigation was because it would grieve Charlie. She could not think about Guy just then, and for Amy, there was nothing for it but patience; and, good little creature, it was very nice to see her put her own troubles aside, and be so cheerful a nurse to her brother. She was almost always in his room, for he liked to have her there, and she could not conquer a certain shrinking from Philip.

Laura had once pleaded hard and earnestly for Guy with Philip, but all in vain, she only was taught to think the case

more hopeless than before. Laura was a very kind nurse and sister, but she could better be spared than her mother and Amy, so that it generally fell to her lot to be down-stairs, making the drawing-room habitable. Dr. Mayerne, whenever Charles was ill, used to be more at Hollywell than at his own house, and there were few days that he did not dine there. When Amy was out of the way, Philip used to entertain them with long accounts of Redclyffe, how fine a place it was, how far the estate reached on the Moorworth road, of its capacities for improvement, wastes of moorland to be enclosed or planted, magnificent timber needing nothing but thinning. He spoke of the number of tenantry, and the manorial rights, and the influence in both town and county, which, in years gone by, had been proved to the utmost in many a fierce struggle with the house of Thorndale. Sir Guy Morville might be one of the first men in England if he were not wanting to himself. Mr. Edmonstone enjoyed such talk, for it made him revel in the sense of his own magnanimity in refusing his daughter to the owner of all this, and Laura sometimes thought how Philip would have graced such a position, yet how much greater it was to rest entirely on his own merits.

"Ah, my fine fellow!" muttered Dr. Mayerne to himself one day, when Philip and his uncle had left the room, just after a discourse of this kind, "I see you have not forgotten you are the next heir."

Laura coloured with indignation, exclaimed "Oh!" then checked herself, as if such an aspersion was not worthy of her taking the trouble to refute it.

"Ah! Miss Edmonstone, I did not know you were there!"

"Yes, you were talking to yourself, just as if you were at home," said Charlotte, who was specially pert to the old doctor, because she knew herself to be a great pet. "You were telling some home truths to make Laura angry."

"Well, he would make a very good use of it if he had it," said the doctor.

"Now you'll make me angry," said Charlotte; and you have not mended matters with Laura. She thinks nothing short of four-syllabled words good enough for Philip."

"Hush! nonsense, Charlotte!" said Laura, much annoyed

"There, Charlotte, she is avenging herself on you because she can't scold me," said the doctor, pretending to whisper.

"Charlotte is only growing more wild than ever for want of mamma," said Laura, trying to laugh it off; but there was so much annoyance evident about her, that Dr. Mayerne said,—"Seriously, I must apologize for my unlucky soliloquy; not that I thought I was saying much harm, for I did not by any means say or think the Captain wished Sir Guy any ill, and few men who stood next in succession to such a property would be likely to forget it."

"Yes, but Philip is not like other men," said Charlotte, who, at fourteen, had caught much of her brother's power of repartee, and could be quite as provoking, when unrestrained by any one whom she cared to obey.

Laura felt it was more for her dignity not to notice this, and replied, with an effort for a laugh,—

"It must be your guilty conscience that sets you apologizing, for you said no harm, as you observe."

"Yes," said Dr. Mayerne, good-humouredly. "He does very well without it, and no doubt he would be one of the first men in the country if he had it; but it is in very good hands now, on the whole. I don't think, even if the lad has been tempted into a little folly just now, that he can ever go very far wrong."

"No, indeed," said Charlotte; "but Charlie and I don't believe he has done any thing wrong."

She spoke in a little surly decided tone, as if her opinion put an end to the matter, and Philip's return closed the discussion.

Divided as the party were between up-stairs and down-stairs, and in the absence of Charles's shrewd observation, Philip and Laura had more opportunity of intercourse than usual, and now that his departure would put an end to suspicion, they ventured on more openly seeking each other. It never could be the perfect freedom that they had enjoyed before the avowal of their sentiments, but they had many brief conversations, giving Laura feverish, but exquisite, delight at each renewal of his rare expressions of tenderness.

"What are you going to do to-day?" he asked, on the last morning before he was to leave Hollywell. "I must see you alone before I go."

She looked down and he kept his eyes fixed on her rather

sternly, for he had never before made a clandestine appointment, and he did not like feeling ashamed of it. At last she said,—

"I go to East Hill School this afternoon. I shall come away at half-past three."

Mary Ross was still absent; her six nephews and nieces having taken advantage of her visit to have the measles, not like reasonable children, all at once, so as to be one trouble, but one after the other, so as to keep Aunt Mary with them as long as possible; and Mr. Ross did not know what would have become of the female department of his parish but for Laura, who worked at school-keeping indefatigably.

Laura had some difficulty in shaking off Charlotte's company this afternoon, and was obliged to make the most of the probability of rain, and the dreadful dirt of the roads. Indeed, she represented it as so formidable, that Mrs. Edmonstone, who had hardly time to look out of window, much less to go out of doors, strongly advised her to stay at home herself; and Charlotte grew all the more eager for the fun. Luckily, however, for Laura, Dr. Mayerne came in, laughing at the reports of the weather, and as he was wanted to prescribe for a poor old man in an opposite direction, he took Charlotte with him to show the way, and she was much better pleased to have him for a companion than the grave Laura.

Philip in the mean time had walked all the way to Broadstone, timing his return exactly, that he might meet Laura as she came out of the school, and feel as if it had been by chance. It was a grey, misty November day, and the leaves of the elm-trees came floating round them, yellow and damp.

"You have had a wet walk," said Laura, as they met.

"It is not quite raining," he answered, and they proceeded for some minutes in silence, until he said,—"It is time we should come to an understanding."

She looked at him in alarm, and his voice was immediately gentler; indeed, at times it was almost inaudible from his strong emotion. "I believe that no affection has ever been stronger or truer than ours."

"Has been!" repeated Laura, in a wondering, bewildered voice.

"And is, if you are satisfied to leave things as they are."

"I must be, if you are."

"I will not say I am satisfied with what must be, as I am

situated; but I felt it due to you to set the true state of the case before you. Few would venture their love as I do mine with you, bound in reality, though not formally, with no promise sought or given; yet I am not more assured that I stand here than I am that our love is for ever."

"I am sure it is!" she repeated fervently. "O Philip, there never was a time I did not love you; and since that day on Ashen Down, I have loved you with my whole heart. I am sometimes afraid it has left no proper room for the rest, when I find how much more I think of your going away than of poor Charles."

"Yes," he said, "you have understood me as none but you would have done, through coldness and reserve, apparently, even towards yourself, and when to others I have seemed grave and severe beyond my years. You have never doubted, you have recognised the warmth within; you have trusted your happiness to me, and it shall be safe in my keeping, for, Laura, it is all mine."

"There is only one thing," said Laura, timidly; "would it not be better if mamma knew?"

"Laura, I have considered that; but remember, you are not bound; I have never asked you to bind yourself. You might marry to-morrow, and I should have no right to complain. There is nothing to prevent you."

She exclaimed, as if with pain.

"True," he answered, "you could not, and that certainty suffices me. I ask no more without your parents' consent; but it would be giving them and you useless distress and perplexity to ask it now. They would object to my poverty, and we should gain nothing; for I would never be so selfish as to wish to expose you to such a life as that of the wife of a poor officer; and an open engagement could not add to our confidence in each other. We must be content to wait for my promotion. By that time"—he smiled gravely—"our attachment will have lasted so many years as to give it a claim to respect."

"It is no new thing."

"No newer than our lives; but remember, my Laura, that you are but twenty."

"You have made me feel much older," sighed Laura; "not that I would be a thoughtless child again. That cannot last long, not even for poor little Amy."

"No one would wish to part with the deeper feelings of elder years to regain the carelessness of childhood, even to be exempted from the suffering that has brought them."

"No, indeed."

"For instance, these two years have scarcely been a time of great happiness to you?"

"Sometimes," whispered Laura, "sometimes beyond all words, but often dreary and oppressive."

"Heaven knows how unwillingly I have rendered it so. Rather than dim the brightness of your life, I would have repressed my own sentiments for ever."

"But, then, where would have been my brightness?"

"I would, I say, but for a peril to you. I see my fears were unfounded. You were safe; but in my desire to guard you from what has come on poor Amy, my feelings, though not wont to overpower me, carried me further than I intended."

"Did they?"

"Do not suppose I regret it. No, no, Laura, those were the most precious moments of my life, when I drew from you those words and looks which have been blessed in remembrance ever since; and doubly, knowing, as I do, that you also prize that day."

"Yes—yes——"

"In the midst of much that was adverse, and with a necessity for a trust and self-control of which scarce a woman but yourself would have been capable, you have endured nobly——"

"I could bear any thing, if you were not going so far away."

"You will bear that, too, Laura, and bravely. It will not be for ever.

"How long do you think?"

"I cannot tell. Several years may pass before I have my promotion. It may be that I shall not see that cheek in its fresh bloom again, but I shall find the same Laura that I left, the same in love, and strength, and trust."

"Ah! I shall grow faded and grey, and you will be a sunburnt old soldier," said Laura, smiling, and looking half sadly half proudly, up to his noble features; "but hearts don't change like faces!"

After they came near the house they walked up and down

the lane for a long time, for Philip avoided a less public path, in order to keep up his delusion that he was doing nothing in an underhand way. It grew dark, and the fog thickened, straightening Laura's auburn ringlets, and hanging in dew-drops on Philip's rough coat, but little recked they; it was such an hour as they had never enjoyed before. Philip had never so laid himself open, or assured her so earnestly of the force of his affection; and her thrills of ecstasy overcame the desolate expectation of his departure, and made her sensible of strength to bear seven, ten, twenty years of loneliness and apparent neglect. She knew him, and he would never fail her.

Yet, when at last they went in-doors, and Amy followed her to her room, wondering to find her so wet, and so late, who could have seen the two sisters without reading greater peace and serenity in the face of the younger?

Philip felt an elder brother's interest for "poor little Amy." He did not see much of her; but he compassionated her as a victim to her mother's imprudence, hoping she would soon be weaned from her attachment. He thought her a good, patient little thing, so soft and gentle as probably not to have the strength and depth that would make the love incurable; and the better he liked her, the more unfit he thought her for Guy. It would have been uniting a dove and a tiger; and his only fear was, that when he was no longer at hand, Mr. Edmonstone's weak good nature might be prevailed on to sacrifice her. He did his best for her protection, by making his uncle express a resolution never to admit Guy into his family again, unless the accusation of gambling was completely disproved.

The last morning came, and Philip went to take leave of Charles. Poor Charles was feebler by this time, and too much subdued by pain and languor to receive him as at first, but the spirit was the same; and when Philip wished him good-bye, saying he hoped soon to hear he was better, he returned for answer,

"Good-bye, Philip, I hope soon to hear you are better. I had rather have my hip than your mind."

He was in no condition to be answered, and Philip repeated his good-bye, little thinking how they were to meet again.

The others were assembled in the hall. His aunt's eyes

were full of tears, for she loved him dearly, her brother's only son, early left motherless, whom she had regarded like her own child, and who had so nobly fulfilled all the fondest hopes. All his overbearing ways and uncalled-for interference were forgotten, and her voice gave way as she embraced him, saying,

"God bless you, Philip, wherever you may be. We shall miss you very much!"

Little Amy's hand was put into his, and he squeezed it kindly; but she could hardly speak her "good-bye" for the tears that came, because she was grieved not to feel more sorry that her highly-esteemed cousin, so kind and condescending to her, was going away for so very long a time.

"Good-bye, Philip," said Charlotte; "I shall be quite grown up by the time you come home."

"Don't make such uncivil auguries, Puss," said her father; but Philip heard her not, for he was holding Laura's hand in a grasp that seemed as if it never would unclose.

CHAPTER XXI.

I will sing, for I am sad,
For many my misdeeds;
It is my sadness makes me glad,
For love for sorrow pleads.
WILLIAMS.

AFTER his last interview with Philip, Guy returned to his rooms to force himself into occupation till his cousin should come to acknowledge that here, at least, there was nothing amiss. He trusted that when it was proved all was right in this quarter, the prejudice with regard to the other might be diminished, though his hopes were lower since he had found out the real grounds of the accusation, reflecting that he should never be able to explain without betraying his uncle.

He waited in vain. The hour passed at which Philip's coming was possible; Guy was disappointed, but looked for a letter; but post after post failed to bring him one. Perhaps Philip would write from Hollywell, or else Mr. Edmonstone would write, or at least he was sure that Charles would write—Charles, whose confidence and sympathy, expressed in almost daily letters, had been such a comfort. But not a line came. He reviewed in memory his last letter to Charles, wondering whether it could have offended him; but it did not seem possible; he thought over all that Philip could have learnt in his visit, to see if it could by any means have been turned to his disadvantage. But he knew he had done nothing to which blame could be attached; he had never infringed the rules of college discipline; and though still backward, and unlikely to distinguish himself, he believed that was the worst likely to have been said of him. He only

wished his true character was as good as what would be reported of him.

As he thought and wondered, he grew more and more restless and unhappy. He could imagine no reason for the silence, unless Mr. Edmonstone had absolutely forbidden any intercourse, and it did not seem probable that he would issue any commands in a manner to bind a grown-up son, more especially as there had been no attempt at communication with Amy. It was terrible thus, without warning, to be cut off from her, and all besides that he loved. As long as Charles wrote, he fancied her sitting by, perhaps sealing the letter, and he could even tell by the kind of paper and envelope, whether they were sitting in the dressing-room or down-stairs; but now there was nothing, no assurance of sympathy, no word of kindness; they might all have given him up; those unhappy words were like a barrier, cutting off for ever from the happiness of which he had once had a glimpse. Was the Redclyffe doom of sin and sorrow really closing in upon him?

If it had not been for chapel and study, he hardly knew how he should have got through that term; but as the end of it approached, a feverish impatience seized on him whenever the post came in, for a letter, if only to tell him *not* to come to Hollywell. None came, and he saw nothing for it, but to go to Redclyffe; and if he dreaded seeing it in its altered state, when his spirits were high and unbroken, how did he shrink from it now? He did, however, make up his mind, for he felt that his reluctance almost wronged his own beloved home. Henry Graham wanted to persuade him to come and spend Christmas at his home, with his lively family, but Guy felt as if gaiety was not for him, even if he could enjoy it. He did not wish to drown his present feelings, and steadily, though gratefully, refused this, as well as one or two other friendly invitations.

After lingering in vain till the last day of term, he wrote to desire that his own room and the library might be made ready for him, and that "something" might be sent to meet him at Moorworth.

Railroads had came a step nearer, even to his remote corner of the world, in the course of the last three years, but there were still thirty miles of coach beyond, and these lay through a part of the country he had never seen before. It

was for the most part bleak, dreary moor, such as, under the cold grey wintry sky, presented nothing to rouse him from his musings on the welcome he might have been at that very moment receiving at Hollywell.

A sudden dip in the high ground made it necessary for the coach to put on the drag, and thus it slowly entered a village, which attracted attention from its wretched appearance. The cottages, of the rough stone of the country, were little better than hovels; slates were torn off, windows broken. Wild-looking, uncombed women, in garments of universal dirt colour, stood at the doors; ragged children ran and shrieked after the coach; the church had a hole in the roof, and stood tottering in spite of rude repairs; the churchyard was trodden down by cattle, and the whole place only resembled the pictures of Irish dilapidation.

"What miserable place is this?" asked a passenger.

"Yes, that's what all gentlemen ask," replied the coachman, "and well you may. There's not a more noted place for thieves and vagabonds. They call it Coombe Prior."

Guy well knew the name, though he had never been there. It was a distant offset of his own property, and a horrible sense of responsibility for all the crime and misery there came over him.

"Is there no one to look after it?" continued the traveller. "No squire, no clergyman?"

"A fox-hunting parson," answered the coachman, "who lives half-a-dozen miles off, and gallops over the service."

Guy knew that the last presentation had been sold in the days of his grandfather's extravagance, and beheld another effect of ancestral sin.

"Do you know who is the owner of the place?"

"Yes, sir, 'tis Sir Guy Morville. You have heard tell of the old Sir Guy Morville, for he made a deal of noise in the world."

"What? The noted——"

"I ought not to allow you to finish your sentence," said Guy, very courteously, "without telling you that I am his grandson."

"I beg your pardon!" exclaimed the traveller.

"Nay," said Guy, with a smile, "I only thought it was fair to tell you."

"Sir Guy himself!" said the coachman, turning round, and touching his hat, anxious to do the honours of his coach

"I have not seen you on this road before, sir, for I never forget a face; I hope you'll often be this way."

After a few more civilities, Guy was at liberty to attend to the fresh influx of sad musings on thoughtless waste, affecting not only the destiny of the individual himself, but whole generations besides. How many souls might it not have ruined? "These sheep, what had they done?" His grandfather had repented, but who was to preach repentance unto these? He did not wonder now that his own hopes of happiness had been blighted; he only marvelled that a bright present or future had ever been his—

> While souls were wandering far and wide,
> And curses swarmed on every side.

The traveller was, meanwhile, observing the heir of Redclyffe, possessor of wealth and wide lands. Little did he guess how that bright-eyed youth looked upon his riches.

Miles were passed in one long melancholy musing, till Guy was roused by the sight of familiar scenes, and found himself rattling over the stones of the little borough of Moorworth, with the grey, large-windowed, old-fashioned houses, on each side, looking at him with friendly eyes. There, behind those limes cut out in arches, was the commercial school, where he had spent many an hour in construing with patient Mr. Potts; and though he had now a juster appreciation of his old master's erudition, which he had once thought so vast, he recollected with veneration his long and patient submission to an irksome, uncongenial life. Rumbling on, the coach was in the square market-place, the odd-looking octagon market-house in the middle, and the inn—the respectable old "George"—with its long rank of stables and out-buildings forming one side. It was at this inn that Guy had been born, and the mistress having been the first person who had him in her arms, considered herself privileged to have a great affection for him, and had delighted in the greetings he always exchanged with her when he put up his pony at her stable, and went to his tutor.

There was a certainty of welcome here that cheered him, as he swung himself from the roof of the coach, lifted Bustle down, and called out to the bar-maid that he hoped Mrs. Lavers was well.

The next moment Mrs. Lavers was at the door herself,

with her broad, good-humoured face, close cap, bright shawl, and black gown, just as Guy always recollected, and might, if he could, have recollected, when he was born. If she had any more guests she neither saw nor cared for them; her welcome was all for him; and he could not but smile and look cheerful, if only that he might not disappoint her, feeling in very truth cheered and gratified by her cordiality. If he was in a hurry, he would not show it; and he allowed her to seat him in her own peculiar abode, behind the glass-cases of tongue and cold chicken, told her he came from Oxford, admired her good fire, and warmed his hands over it, before he even asked if the "something" had arrived which was to take him home.

It was coming to the door at the moment, and proved to be Mr. Markham's tall high-wheeled gig, drawn by the old white-faced chestnut, and driven by Markham himself—a short, sturdy, brown-red, honest-faced old man, with frosted hair and whiskers, an air more of a yeoman than of a lawyer; and though not precisely gentlemanlike, yet not ungentlemanlike, as there was no pretension about him.

Guy darted out to meet him, and was warmly shaken by the hand, though the greeting was gruff.

"So, Sir Guy! how d'ye do! I wonder what brings you here on such short notice? Good morning, Mrs. Lavers. Bad roads this winter."

"Good morning, Mr. Markham. It is a treat, indeed, to have Sir Guy here once more; so grown, too."

"Grown—hum?" said Markham, surveying him; "I don't see it. He'll never be as tall as his father. Have you got your things, Sir Guy? Ay, that's the way,—care for nothing but the dog. Gone on by the coach most likely."

They might have been, for aught Guy knew to the contrary, but Boots had been more attentive, and they were right. Mrs. Lavers begged he would walk in, and warm himself; but Markham answered—

"What do you say, Sir Guy? The road is shocking, and it will be as dark as a pit by the time we get home."

"Very well; we won't keep old Whiteface standing," said Guy. "Good-bye, Mrs. Lavers; thank you. I shall see you again before long."

Before Markham had finished a short private growl on the shocking state of the Moorworth pavement, and a protest that somebody should be called over the coals, Guy began,—

"What a horrible place Coombe Prior is!"

"I only know I wish you had more such tenants as Todd," was Markham's answer. "Pays his rent to a day, and improves his land."

"But what sort of man is he?"

"A capital farmer. A regular screw, I believe; but that is no concern of mine."

"There are all the cottages tumbling down."

"Ay? Are they? I shouldn't wonder, for they are all in his lease and he would not lay out an unproductive farthing. And a precious bad lot they are there, too! There were actually three of them poaching in Cliffstone hanger this autumn; but we have them in jail. A pretty pass of impudence to be coming that distance to poach!"

Guy used to be kindled into great wrath by the most distant hint of poachers; but now he cared for men, not for game, and instead of asking, as Markham expected, the particulars of their apprehension, continued—

"The clergyman is that Halroyd, is he not?"

"Yes; every one knows what he is. I declare it went against me to take his offer for the living; but it could not be helped. Money must be had; but there! least said, soonest mended."

"We must mend it," said Guy, so decidedly, that Markham looked at him in surprise.

"I don't see what's to be done till Halroyd dies; and then you may give the living to whom you please. He lives so hard he can't last long, that is one comfort."

Guy sighed and pondered; and presently Markham resumed the conversation.

"And what has brought you home at a moment's notice? You might as well have written two or three days before, at least."

"I was waiting, in hopes of going to Hollywell," said Guy, sorrowfully.

"Well, and what is the matter? You have not been quarrelling with your guardian, I hope and trust? Going the old way, after all!" exclaimed Markham, not in his usual gruff, grumbling note, but with real anxiety, and almost mournfulness.

"He took up some unjust suspicion of me. I could not bear it patiently, and said something that has offended him."

"Oh, Sir Guy! hot and fiery as ever. I always told you that hasty temper would be the ruin of you."

"Too true!" said Guy, so dejectedly, that the old man instantly grew kinder, and was displeased with Mr. Edmonstone.

"What could he have taken into his head to suspect you of?"

"Of gaming at St. Mildred's."

"You have not?"

"Never!"

"Then why does he not believe you?"

"He thinks he has proof against me. I can't guess how he discovered it; but I was obliged to pay some money to a gambling sort of man, and he thinks I lost it."

"Then why don't you show him your accounts?"

"For one reason—because I have kept none."

As if it was an immense relief to his mind, Markham launched out into a discourse on the extreme folly, imprudence, and all other evils of such carelessness. He was so glad to find this was the worst, that his lecture lasted for two miles and a half, during which Guy, though attentive at first, had ample space for all the thrills of recognition at each well-known spot.

There was the long, green-wooded valley between the hills, where he had shot his first woodcock; there was the great stone on which he had broken his best knife in a fit of geological research; there was the pool where he used to skate; there was the sudden break in the hills that gave the first view of the sea. He could not help springing up at the sight, pale, leaden, and misty as it was; and though Markham forthwith rebuked him for not listening, his heart was still beating as at the first sight of a dear old friend, when that peep was far behind. More black heaths, with stacks of peat and withered ferns. Guy was straining his eyes far off in the darkness to look for the smoke of the old keeper's cottage chimney, and could with difficulty refrain from interrupting Markham to ask after the old man.

Another long hill, and then began a descent into a rich valley, beautiful fields of young wheat, reddish soil, full of fatness, large spreading trees, with noble limbs, cottages, and cottage gardens, very unlike poor Coombe Prior; Markham's house,—a perfect little snuggery,—covered all over with

choice climbing plants, the smart plastered doctor's house, the Morville Arms, looking honest and venerable, the church, with its disproportionately high tower, the parsonage rather hidden behind it; and, on the opposite side of the road, the park wall and the gate, where old Sarah stood, in an ecstasy of curtsies.

Guy jumped out to meet her, and to spare Whiteface; for there was a sharp steep bit of hill, rising from the lodge, trying to horses, in spite of the road being cut out in long spirals. On he ran, leaving the road to Markham, straight up the high, steep, slippery green slope. He came in sight of the great dark-red sand-stone pile of building; but he passed it, and ran on to where the ground rose on one side of it still more abruptly, and at the highest point was suddenly broken away and cut off into a perpendicular crag, descending in some parts sheer down to the sea, in others, a little broken, and giving space for the growth of stunted brushwood. He stood at the highest point, where the precipice was most abrupt. The sea was dashing far beneath; the ripple, dash, and roar were in his ears once more; the wind—such wind as only blows over the sea—was breathing on his face; the broad, free horizon far before him, the field of waves, in grey and brown shade, indeed, but still his own beloved waves; the bay, shut in with rocks, and with black Shag Island and its train of rocks projecting far out to the west, and almost immediately beneath him, to the left, the little steep street of the fishing part of the village, nestled into the cove, which was formed by the mouth of a little mountain stream, and the dozen boats it could muster rocking on the water.

Guy stood and looked as if he could never cease looking, or enjoying the sea-air and salt breeze. It was real pleasure at first, for there were his home, his friends; and though there was a throb and tightness of heart at thinking how all was changed but such as this, and how all must change; how he had talked with Amy of this very thing, and had longed to have her standing beside him there; yet there was more of soothing than suffering in the sensation.

So many thoughts rushed through his mind, that he fancied he had stood there a long time, when he turned and hastened down again, but he had been so rapid as to meet Markham before the servants had had time to miss him.

The servants were indeed few. There was, alas! William

of Deloraine, waiting to hold Whiteface; there was Arnaud, an old Swiss, first courier and then butler to Sir Guy; there was Mrs. Drew, the housekeeper, also a very old servant; and these were all; but their welcome was of the heartiest, in feeling, if not in demonstration, as the gig went with an echoing, thundering sound under the deep archway that led into the paved quadrangle round which the house was built, that court where, as Philip had truly averred, the sun hardly ever shone, so high were the walls on each side.

Up the stone steps into the spacious dark hall, and into the large, gloomy library, partially lighted by a great wood fire, replying to Mrs. Drew's questions about his dinner and his room, and asking Markham to stay and dine with him, Guy at length found himself at home, in the very room where he had spent every evening of his boyhood, with the same green leather arm-chair, in the very place where his grandfather used to sit.

Markham consented to dine with him, and the evening was spent in talking over the news of Redclyffe. Markham spoke with much bitterness of the way in which Captain Morville had taken upon him; his looking into the accounts, though any one was welcome to examine them, was, he thought, scarcely becoming in so young a man,—the heir-at-law, too.

"He can't help doing minutely whatever he undertakes," said Guy. "If you had him here, you would never have to scold him like me."

"Heaven forbid!" said Markham, hastily. "I know the same place would not hold him and me long."

"You have told me nothing of our new vicar. How do you get on with him?"

"None the better for that same Captain Morville,' replied Markham, plunging forthwith into his list of grievances, respecting which he was waging a petty warfare, in the belief that he was standing up for his master's rights.

Mr. Bernard, the former clergyman, had been a quiet, old-fashioned man, very kind-hearted, but not at all active, and things had gone on in a sleepy, droning, matter-of-fact way, which, Markham being used to, thought exactly what ought to be. Now, Mr. Ashford was an energetic person, desirous to do his utmost for the parish, and whatever he did was an

offence to Markham, from the daily service, to the objecting to the men going out fishing on Sunday. He opposed every innovation with all his might, and Captain Morville's interference, which had borne Markham down with Mr. Edmonstone's authority, had only made him more determined not to bate an inch. He growled every time Guy was inclined to believe Mr. Ashford in the right, and brought out some fresh complaint. The grand controversy was at present about the school. There was a dame school in the Cove, or fishing part of the parish, maintained at the expense of the estate, in a small cottage far from the church, and Mr. and Mrs. Ashford had fixed their eyes on a house in the village, and so near the church as to be very convenient for a Sunday-school. It only wanted to be floored, and to have a partition taken down, but to this Markham would not consent, treating it as a monstrous proposal to take away the school from old Jenny Robinson.

"I suppose Mr. Ashford meant to pension her off?" said Guy.

"He did say something about it; but who is to do it, I should like to know?"

"We are, I suppose."

"Pay two schoolmistresses at once! One for doing nothing! A pretty tolerable proposal for Mr. Ashford to be making!"

"I don't see why. Of course it is my business."

"Besides, I don't see that she is not as fit to keep school as ever she was."

"That may well be," said Guy, smiling. "We never used to be noted for our learning."

"Don't you be for bringing new lights into the parish, Sir Guy, or we shall never have any more peace."

"I shall see about old Jenny," answered Guy. "As to the house, that must be done directly. Her cottage is not fit to keep school in."

Grunt, grunt; but though a very unbending viceroy, a *must* from the reigning baronet had a potent effect on Markham, whether it was for good or evil. He might grumble, but he never disobeyed, and the boy he was used to scold and order had found that Morville intonation of the *must*, which took away all idea of resistance. He still, however, remonstrated.

"As you please, Sir Guy, but we shall have the deer frightened, and the plantations cut to pieces, if the boys from the Cove are to be crossing the park."

"I'll be answerable for all the damage. If they are once properly spoken to, they will be on honour to behave well. I have seen a little of what a village school ought to be at East Hill, and I should like to see Redclyffe like it."

Grunt again; and Guy found that to make Markham amiable, he must inquire after all his nephews and nieces."

All the evening he had much to occupy him, and the dreaded sense of solitude and bereavement did not come on till he had parted with Markham, and stood alone before the fire in the large, gloomy room, where the light of the lamp seemed absorbed in the darkness of the distant corners, and where he had scarcely been since the moment when he found his grandfather senseless in that very chair. How different had that room once been in his eyes, when his happy spirits defied every association of gloom, and the book-shelves, the carved chairs, the heavy dark-green curtains, and deep windows, were connected with merry freaks, earnest researches, delightful achievements or discoveries! How long ago that time seemed! and how changed was he!

There was a certain tendency to melancholy in Guy's mind. High spirits, prosperity, and self-discipline, had kept it from developing itself until the beginning of his troubles, but since that time it had been gradually gaining ground, and this was a time of great suffering, as he stood alone in his forefathers' house, and felt himself, in his early youth, a doomed man, destined to bear the penalty of their crimes in the ruin of his dearest hopes, as if his heirloom of misery had but waited to seize on him till the very moment when it would give him the most to endure.

"But bear it I must and will!" said he, lifting his head from the carved chimney-piece, where he had been resting it. "I have been in will a murderer myself, and what right have I to repine like the Israelites, with their self-justifying proverb? No; let me be thankful that I was not given up even then, but have been able to repent, and do a little better next time. It will be a blessing as yet ungranted to any of us, if indeed I should bear to the full the doom of sorrow, so that it may be vouchsafed me only to avoid actual guilt. Yes, Amy your words are still with me.—'Sintram con-

quered his doom,'—and it was by following death! Welcome, then, whatever may be in store for me, were it even a long, cheerless life without you, Amy. There is another world!"

With the energy of freshened resolution, he lighted his candle, and walked, with echoing steps, up the black oak staircase, along the broad gallery, up another flight, down another passage, to his own room. He had expressly written "his own room," and confirmed it on his arrival, or Mrs. Drew would have lodged him as she thought more suitably for the master of the house. Nothing had been done to alter its old, familiar aspect, except lighting a fire, which he had never seen there before. There were all his boyish treasures, his bows and arrows, his collection of birds' wings, his wonderful weapons and contrivances, from his fire-balloon down to the wren's egg, all just as he left them, their good condition attesting the care that Mrs. Drew had taken for his sake.

He renewed his acquaintance with them, with a sort of regretful affection and superiority; but there was a refreshment in these old memories which aided the new feeling of life imparted to him by his resolution to bear. Nor had he only to bear, he had also to *do;* and before the late hour at which he fell asleep, he had made up his mind what was the first step to be taken about Coombe Priory, and had remembered with rejoicing, that whereas he had regretted leaving the chapel at college which had so comforted and helped him, there was now daily service at Redclyffe Church. The last thing in his mind, before reflection was lost in sleep, was this stanza,—

"Gales from heaven, if so He will,
Sweeter melodies may wake
On the lonely mountain rill
Than the meeting waters make.
Who hath the Father and the Son,
May be left, but not alone."

CHAPTER XXII.

And when the solemn deep church bell
  Entreats the soul to pray,
The midnight phantoms feel the spell,
  The shadows sweep away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar,
  The spectral camp is fled;
Faith shineth as a morning star,
  Our ghastly fears are dead.

LONGFELLOW.

MR. ASHFORD was a connection of Lady Thorndale's, and it was about a year since the living of Redclyffe had been presented to him. Mr. and Mrs. Ashford were of course anxious to learn all they could about their young squire, on whom the welfare of the parish depended, even more than in most cases, as the whole was his property. Their expectations were not raised by Mr. Markham's strenuous opposition to all their projects, and his constant appeals to the name of "Sir Guy;" but on the other hand, they were pleased by the strong feeling of affection that all the villagers manifested for their landlord.

The inhabitants of Redclyffe were a primitive race, almost all related to each other, rough and ignorant, and with a very strong feudal feeling for "Sir Guy," who was king, state, supreme authority, in their eyes; and Mrs. Ashford further found that "Master Morville," as the old women called him in his individual character, was regarded by them with great personal affection.

On the occasion when Captain Morville came to Redclyffe, and left James Thorndale to spend a couple of hours at the parsonage, they interrogated the latter anxiously on his ac-

quaintance with Sir Guy. He had not the least idea of creating prejudice, indeed, he liked him as a companion, but he saw every thing through the medium of his friend, and spoke something to this effect: He was very agreeable; they would like his manners; he was tolerably clever, but not to be named in the same day with his cousin for abilities, far less in appearance. Very pleasant, generally liked, decidedly a taking man; but there was some cloud over him just now—debts, probably. Morville had been obliged to go to Oxford about it; but Mr. Thorndale did not profess to understand it, as of course Morville said as little of it as he could. Thereupon all began to admire the aforesaid Morville, already known by report, and whose fine countenance and sensible conversation confirmed all that had been said of him.

And as, after his interference, Mr. Markham's opposition became surly, as well as sturdy, and Sir Guy's name was sure to stand arrayed against the whichever way they turned, the younger part of the family learnt to regard him somewhat in the light of an enemy, and their elders awaited his majority with more of fear than of hope.

"Mamma!" cried Edward Ashford, rushing in, so as to bring the first news to his mother, who had not been to the early service, "I do believe Sir Guy is come!"

"Sir Guy was at church!" shouted Robert, almost at the same moment.

Mr. Ashford confirmed the intelligence.

"I saw him speaking, after church, to some of the old men, so afterwards I went to ask old John Barton, and found him with tears in his eyes, positively trembling with delight, for he said he never thought to have heard his cheery voice again, and that he was coming down by and by to see the last letter from Ben, at sea."

"That is very nice! Shall you call?"

"Yes. Even if he is only here for a day or two, it will be better to have made the acquaintance."

Mr. Ashford went on to the park at two in the afternoon, and did not return till near four.

"Well," said he, "it is as James Thorndale says, there is something very prepossessing about him."

"Have you been there all this time?"

"Yes. He was not at home, so I left my card, and was coming away, when I met him at the turn leading to the

Cove. He need not have seen me unless he had liked, but he came up in a good-natured cordial way, and thanked me for coming to call."

"Is he like his cousin?"

"Not in the least; not nearly so tall or so handsome, but with a very pleasant face, and seeming made up of activity, very slight, as if he was all bone and sinew. He said he was going to see the Christmas ox at the farm, and asked me to come with him. Presently we came to a high gate, locked up. He was over it in an instant, begged me to wait while he ran on to the farm for the key, and was back in a second with it."

"Did he enter on any of the disputed subjects?"

"He began himself about the school, saying the house should be altered directly; and talked over the whole matter very satisfactorily; undertook himself to speak to Jenny Robinson; and was very glad to hear you meant her still to keep the infants at the Cove; so I hope that matter is in a right train."

"If Mr. Markham will but let him."

"O, he is king or more here! We met Markham at the farm; and the first thing, after looking at the cattle, Sir Guy found some planks lying about, and said they were the very thing for flooring the school. Markham mentioned some barn they were intended for, but Sir Guy said the school must be attended to at once, and went with us to look at it. That was what kept me so long, measuring and calculating, and I hope it may be begun in a week.

"This is delightful! What more could we wish?"

"I don't think he will give trouble in parish matters, and in personal intercourse he will be sure to be most agreeable. I wish I knew there was nothing amiss. It seems strange for him to come here for the vacation, instead of going to his guardian's as usual, and altogether he had an air of sadness and depression, not like a youth, especially such an active one. I am afraid something is wrong; those engaging people are often unstable. One thing I forgot to tell you. We were walking through that belt of trees on the east side of the hill, when he suddenly called out to ask how came the old ash-trees to be marked. Markham answered in his gruff way it was not his doing, but the Captain's. He turned crimson, and begun some angry exclamation; but as Mark

ham was going to tell something else about it, he stopped him short, saying, 'Never mind! I dare say it's all right. I don't want to hear any more!' and I don't think he spoke much again till we got into the village. I am afraid there is some misunderstanding between the cousins."

"Or more likely Mr. Markham is teaching him some jealousy of his heir. We could not expect two Captain Morvilles in one family, and I am glad it is no worse."

All that the Ashfords further saw of their young baronet made an impression in his favour; every difficulty raised by the steward disappeared; their plans were forwarded, and they heard of little but his good nature to the poor people; but still they did not know how far to trust these appearances, and did not yet venture to form an opinion on him, or enter into intimacy

"So the singers will not come to us on Christmas Eve, because they say they must go to the Park," said Edward, rather savagely.

"I was thinking," said Mrs. Ashford, "how forlorn it will be for that poor youth to spend his Christmas day alone, in that great house. Don't you think we might ask him to dinner?"

Before Mr. Ashford could answer, the boys made such an uproar at the proposal of bringing a stranger to spoil their Christmas that their parents gave up the idea.

It was that Christmas day that Guy especially dreaded, as recalling so many contrasts both with those passed here and at Holywell. Since his return, he had been exerting himself to attend to what he felt to be his duty, going about among his people, arranging for their good or pleasure, and spending a good deal of time over his studies. He had written to Mr. Ross, to ask his advice about Coombe Prior, and had set Markham, much against his will, to remonstrate with Farmer Todd about the repairs; but though there was a sort of satisfaction in doing these things; though the attachment of his dependents soothed him, and brought a new sense of the relation between himself and them; though views of usefulness were on each side opening before him; yet there was a dreariness about every thing; he was weary even while he undertook and planned energetically; each new project reminding him that there was no Amy to plan with him. He could not sufficiently care for them.

Still more dreary was his return to his old haunts, and to the scenery which he loved so devotedly, the blue sea and purple hills which had been like comrades and playfellows, before he had known what it was to have living companions. They used to be every thing to him, and he had scarcely a wish beyond; afterwards his dreams had been of longing affection for them, and latterly the idea of seeing Amy love them and admire them had been connected with every vision of them; and now the sight of the reality did but recall the sense that their charm had departed; they could no longer suffice to him as of old, and their presence brought back to him with fresh pangs of disappointment the thought of lost happiness and ruined hopes, as if Amy alone could restore their value.

The depression of his spirits inclined him to dwell at present more on the melancholy history of his parents than on any thing else. He had hitherto only heard the brief narration of his grandfather, when he could ask no questions, but he now obtained full particulars from Markham, who, when he found him bent on hearing all, related every thing, perhaps intending it as a warning against the passion which, when once called into force, he dreaded to find equally ungovernable in his present master.

Mr. Morville had been his great pride and glory, and, in fact, had been so left to his care as to have been regarded like a son of his own. He had loved him, if possible, better than Guy, because he had been more his own; he had chosen his school, and given him all the reproofs which had ever been bestowed on him with his good in view; and how he had grieved for him was never known to man. It was the first time he had ever talked it over; and he described, with strong, deep feeling, the noble face and bearing of the dark-eyed, gallant-looking stripling, his generosity and high spirit tainted and ruined by his wild temper and impatience of restraint. There seemed to have been a great sweetness of disposition, excellent impulses, and so strong a love of his father, in spite of early neglect and present resentment, as showed what he might have been with only tolerable training, which gave Guy's idea of him more individuality than it had ever had before, and made him better understand what his unhappy grandfather's remorse had been. Guy doubted for a moment whether it had not been selfish to make Markham narrate the history of the time when he had suffered so much; and Mark-

ham, when he had been led into telling it, and saw the deepening sadness on his young master's countenance, wished it had not been told, and ended by saying it was of no use to stir up what was better forgotten.

He would have regretted the telling it still more if he had known how Guy acted it all over in his solitude, picturing his father standing an outcast at the door of his own home, yielding his pride and resentment for the sake of his wife, ready to do any thing, yearning for reconciliation, longing to tread once more the friendly, familiar hall, and meeting only the angry repulse and cruel taunt! He imagined the headlong passion, the despair, the dashing on his horse in whirl-wind-like swiftness; then the blow, the fall, the awful stillness of the form, carried back to his father's house, and laid on that table a dead man! Fierce wrath,—then another world! Guy worked himself up in imagining the horror of the scene, till it was almost as if he had been an actor in it.

Yet he had never cared so much for the thought of his father as for his mother. His yearning for her which he had felt in early days at Hollywell, had returned in double force, as he now fancied that she would have been here to comfort him, and to share his grief, to be a Mrs. Edmonstone, whose love no fault and no offence could ever cancel.

He rode to Moorworth, and made Mrs. Lavers tell him all she remembered. She was nothing loth, and related how she had been surprised by Mr. Morville arriving with his fair, shrinking young wife, and how she had rejoiced in his coming home again. She described Mrs. Morville with beautiful blue eyes and flaxen hair, looking pale and delicate, and with clinging, caressing ways like a little child afraid to be left.

"Poor thing!" said Mrs. Lavers, wiping her eyes; "when he was going, she clung about him and cried, and was so timid about being left, that at last he called me, and begged me to stay with her and take care of her. It was very pretty to see how gentle and soft he was to her, sharp and hasty as he was with most; and she would not let him go, coaxing him not to stay away long, till at last he put her on the sofa, saying, 'There, there, Marianne, that will do. Only be a good child, and I'll come for you.' I never forget those words, for they were the last I ever heard him speak."

"Well?"

"Poor dear, she cried heartily at first; but after a time

she cheered up and quite made friends with me. I remember she told me which were Mr. Morville's favourite songs, and sang little scraps of them."

"Can you remember what they were?" eagerly exclaimed Guy.

"Law, no, sir; I never had no head for music. And she laughed about her journey to Scotland, and got into spirits, only she could not bear I should go out of the room; and after a time she grew very anxious for him to come back. I made her some tea, and tried to get her to bed, but she would not go, though she seemed very tired; for she said Mr. Morville would come to take her to Redclyffe, and she wanted to hear all about the great house, listening for him all the time, and I trying to quiet her, and telling her the longer he stayed the better chance there was. Then came a call for me, and down stairs I found every thing in confusion; the news had come—I never knew how. I had not had time to hear it rightly myself, when there was a terrible cry from up stairs. Poor thing! whether she thought he was come, or whether her mind misgave her, she had come after me to the head of the stairs, and heard what they were saying. I don't believe she ever rightly knew what had happened, for before I could get to her she had fainted; and she was very ill from that moment."

"And it was the next day she died!" said Guy, looking up, after a long silence. "Did she—could she take any notice of me?"

"No, sir; she lived but half an hour, or hardly that, after you were born. I told her it was a son; but she was not able to hear or mind me, and sank away, fainting like. I fancied I heard her say something like 'Mr. Morville,' but I don't know; and her breath was very soon gone. Poor dear!" added Mrs. Lavers, wiping away her tears. "I grieved for her as if she had been my own child; but then I thought of her waking up to hear he was dead. I little thought then, Sir Guy, that I should ever see you stand there, —strong and well grown. I almost thought you were dead already when I sent for Mr. Harrison to baptize you."

"Was it you that did so?" said Guy, his face, mournful before, lighting up in a sudden beam of gratitude. "Then I have to thank you for more than all the world besides."

"Law, sir!" said Mrs. Lavers, smiling, and looking

pleased, though as if but half entering into his meaning. "Yes, it was in that very china bowl; I have kept it choice ever since, and never let it be used for any thing. I thought it was making very bold, but the doctor and all thought you could not live, and Mr. Harrison might judge. I was very glad just before he came, that Mr. Markham came from Redclyffe. He had not been able to leave poor Sir Guy before."

Guy soon after set out on his homeward ride. His yearning to hear of his mother had been satisfied; but though he could still love the fair, sweet vision summoned up by her name, he was less disposed to feel that it had been hard upon him that she died. It was not Amy. In spite of his tender compassion and affection, he knew that he had not lost a Verena in her. None could occupy that place save Amy; and his mind, from custom, reverted to Amy as still his own, thrilled like a freshly touched wound, and tried to realize the solace that even yet she might be praying for him.

It was dreariness and despondency by day, and he struggled with it by energy and occupation; but it was something even worse in the evening, in the dark, solitary library, where the very size of the room gave an additional sense of loneliness; and in the silence he could hear, through the closed shutters, the distant plash and surge of the tide,—a sound of which in former years he had never been sensible. There, evening after evening, he sat,—his attention roaming from his employment to feed on his sad reflections.

One evening he went to the large dark dining-room, unlocked the door, which echoed far through the house, and found his way through the packed-up furniture to a picture against the wall, to which he held up his light. It was a portrait, by Lely, a half-length of a young man, one hand on his sword, the other holding his plumed hat. His dark chestnut hair fell on each side of a bright youthful face, full of life and health, and with eyes which, even in painting, showed what their vividness must have been. The countenance was full of spirit and joy; but the mouth was more hard and stern than suited the rest; and there was something in the strong determined grasp of the sword which made it seem as if the hand might be a characteristic portrait. In the corner of the picture was the name—"Hugo Morville. Æt. 20, 1671."

Guy stood holding up his light, and looking fixedly at it

for a considerable time. Strange thoughts passed through his mind as the pictured eyes seemed to gaze piercingly down into his own. When he turned away he muttered aloud,—

"He, too, would have said—'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this?'"

It seemed to him as if he had once been in a happier, better world, with the future dawning brightly on him; but as if that once yielding to the passions inherited from that wretched man, had brought on him the doom of misery. He had opened the door to the powers of evil, and must bear the penalty.

These feelings might partly arise from it having been only now that, had all been well, he could have been with Amabel; so that it seemed as if he had never hitherto appreciated the loss. He had at first comforted himself by thinking it was better to be without her than to cause her distress; but now he found how hard it was to miss her—his bright angel. Darkness was closing on him, a tedious, aimless life spread out before him, a despair of doing good haunted him, and with it a sense of something like the presence of an evil spirit triumphing in his having once put himself within its grasp.

It was well for Guy that he was naturally active, and had acquired power over his own mind. He would not allow himself to brood over these thoughts by day, and in the evening he busied himself as much as possible with his studies, or in going over with Markham matters that would be useful to him to know when he came to the management of his property. Yet still these thoughts would thicken on him, in spite of himself, every evening when he sat alone in the library.

The late hours of Christmas Eve was the time when he had most to suffer. The day had been gloomy and snowy, and he had spent it almost entirely in solitude, with no companion or diversion to restore the tone of his mind, when he had tried it with hard study. He tried to read, but it would not do; and he was reduced to sit looking at the fire, recalling this time last year, when he had been cutting holly, helping the sisters to deck the house, and in the evening enjoying a merry Christmas party, full of blitheness and glee, where there were, of course, special recollections of Amabel.

As usual, he dwelt on the contrast, mused on the estrangement of Mrs. Edmonstone, and tormented himself about

Charles's silence, till he fell into the more melancholy train of thought of the destiny of his race.

Far better for him to bear all alone than to bring on Amy grief and horror, such as had fallen on his own mother; but it was much to bear that loneliness and desolation for a lifetime. The brow was contracted, and the lip drawn into a resolute expression of keeping down suffering, like that of a man enduring acute bodily pain; as Guy was not yielding, he was telling himself—telling the tempter, who would have made him give up the struggle—that it was only for a life, and that it was shame and ingratitude to be faint-hearted on the very night when he ought to be rejoicing that One had come to ruin the power of the foe, and set him free. But where was his rejoicing? Was he cheered,—was he comforted? Was not the lone, blank despondency that had settled on him more heavily than ever, a token that he was shut out from all that was good,—nay, that in former years there had been no true joy in him, only enjoyment of temporal pleasure? Had his best days of happiness been, then, nothing but hollowness and self-deception?

At that moment the sound of a Christmas carol came faintly on his ear. It was one of those tunes which, when the village choir were the only musicians he knew, he had thought unrivalled; and now, even to his tutored, delicate ear, softened as it was by distance, and endeared by association, it was full of refreshing, soothing harmony. He undrew the curtain, opened the shutter, and looked into the court, where he saw some figures standing. As soon as the light shone from the window, the carol was resumed, and the familiar tones were louder and harsher; but he loved them, with all their rudeness and dissonance, and throwing up the window, called the singers by name, asking why they stood out in the snow, instead of coming into the hall, as usual.

The oldest of the set came to the window to answer,—so old a man, that his voice was cracked, and his performance did more harm than good in the psalms at church.

"You see, Sir Guy," said he, "there was some of us thought you might not like to have us coming and singing like old times, 'cause 'tis not all as it used to be here with you. Yet we didn't like not to come at all, when you had been away so long, so we settled just to begin, and see whether you took any notice."

"Thank you. It was a very kind thought, James," said Guy, touched by the rough delicacy of feeling manifested by these poor men; "I had rather hear the carols than any thing. Come to the front door; I'll let you in."

"Thank you, sir," with a most grateful touch of the hat; and Guy hastened to set things in order, preferring the carols to every thing at that moment, even though disabused of his pristine admiration for James Robinson's fiddle, and for Harry Ray's grand shake. A long space was spent in listening, and a still longer in the endeavour to show what Mr. Ashford meant by suggesting some improvements which they were regarding with dislike and suspicion, till they found Sir Guy was of the same mind. In fact, when he had sung a verse or two to illustrate his meaning, the opinion of the choir was, that with equal advantages, Sir Guy might sing quite as well as Harry Ray.

It was the first time he had heard his own voice, except at church, since the earlier days at St. Mildred's, but as he went up the long stairs and galleries to bed, he found himself still singing. It was,—

Who lives forlorn,
On God's own word doth rest,
His path is bright
With heavenly light,
His lot among the blest.

He wondered, and remembered finding music for it with Amy's help. He sighed heavily, but the anguish of feeling, the sense of being in the power of evil, had insensibly left him, and though sad and oppressed, the unchangeable joy and hope of Christmas were shedding a beam on him.

They were not gone when he awoke, and rose to a solitary breakfast without one Christmas greeting. The light of the other life was beginning to shine out and make him see how to do and to bear, with that hope before him. The hope was becoming less vague; the resolution, though not more firm, yet less desponding, that he would go on to grapple with temptation, and work steadfastly; and with that hope before him, he now felt that even a lifetime without Amy would be endurable.

The power of rejoicing came more fully at church, and the service entered into his soul as it had never done before. It had never been such happiness, though repentance and mournful feelings were ever present with him, nor was his "Verena"

absent from his mind. He walked about between the services, saw the poor people dining in their holly-decked houses, exchanging Christmas wishes with them, and gave his old, beautiful, bright smile as he received demonstrations of their attachment, or beheld their enjoyment. He went home in the dark, allowed Mrs. Drew to have her own way, and serve him and Bustle with a dinner sufficient for a dozen people, and was shut up for the solitary Christmas evening which he had so much dreaded, and which would have been esteemed a misfortune even by those who had no sad thoughts to occupy them.

Yet when the clock struck eleven he was surprised, and owned that it had been more than not being unhappy. The dark fiends of remorse and despair had not once assaulted him, yet it had not been by force of employment that they had been averted. He had read and written a little, but very little, and the time had chiefly been spent in a sort of day-dream, though not of a return to Hollywell, nor of what Redclyffe might be to Amy. It had been of a darkened and lonely course, yet, in another sense, neither dark nor lonely, of a cheerless home and round of duties, with a true home beyond; and still it had been a happy, refreshing dream, and he began the next morning with the fresh, brightened spirit of a man who felt that such an evening was sent him to re-invigorate his energies, and fit him for the immediate duties that lay before him.

On the breakfast-table was what he had not seen for a long time—a letter directed to him. It was from Mr. Ross, in answer to his questions about Coombe Prior, entering readily into the subject, and advising him to write to the Bishop, altogether with a tone of friendly interest which, especially as coming from one so near Hollywell, was a great pleasure, a real Christmas treat. There was the wonted wish of the season—a happy Christmas—which he took gratefully, and lastly there was a mention that Charles Edmonstone was better, the suffering over, though he was not yet allowed to move.

It was a new light that Charles's silence had been occasioned by illness, and his immediate resolution was to write at once to Mr. Ross, to beg for further particulars. In the mean time, the perception that there had been no estrangement was such a ray as can hardly be imagined without knowing the despondency it had enlivened. The truth was, *perhaps*, that the tone of mind was recovering, and after hav-

ing fixed himself in his resolution to endure, he was able to receive comfort and refreshment from without as well as from within.

He set to work to write at once to the Bishop as Mr. Ross advised. He said he could not bear to lose time, and therefore wrote at once. He should be of age on the 28th of March, and he hoped then to be able to arrange for a stipend for a curate, if the Bishop approved, and would kindly enter into communication on the appointment with Mr. Halroyd, the incumbent. After considering his letter a little while, and wishing he was sufficiently intimate with Mr. Ashford to ask him if it would do, he wrote another to Mr. Ross to inquire after Charles; then he worked for an hour at mathematics, till a message came from the gamekeeper to ask whether he would go out shooting, whereat Bustle, evidently understanding, jumped about, and wagged his tail so imploringly, that Guy could not resist; so he threw his books upon the top of the great pile on the sofa, and glad that at least he could gratify dog and man, he sent word that he should be ready in five minutes.

He could not help enjoying the ecstasy of all the dogs, and, indeed, he was surprised to find himself fully alive to the delight of forcing his way through a furze-brake, hearing the ice in the peaty bogs crackle beneath his feet, getting a good shot, bringing down his bird, finding snipes, and diving into the depths of the long, winding valleys and dingles, with the icicle-hung banks of their streamlets. He came home through the village at about half-past three o'clock, sending the keeper to leave some of his game at the parsonage, while he went himself to see how the work was getting on at the school. Mr. and Mrs. Ashford and the boys were come on the same errand, in spite of the cloud of dust rising from the newly-demolished lath-and-plaster partition. The boys looked with longing eyes at the gun in his hand, and the half-frozen compound of black and red mud on his gaiters; but they were shy, and their enmity added to their shyness, so that, even when he shook hands with them, and spoke good-naturedly, they did not get beyond a monosyllable.

Mr. and Mrs. Ashford, feeling some compunction for having left him to his solitude so long, asked him to dinner for one of the ensuing days, with some idea of getting some one to meet him, and named six o'clock.

"Won't that put you out? Don't you always dine early?" said he. "If you would let me, I should like to join you at your tea-time."

"If you will endure a host of children," said Mr. Ashford.

"I should like it of all things," said Guy. "I want to make acquaintance very much," and he put his hand on Robert's shoulder. "Besides, I want to talk to you about the singing, and how we are to get rid of that fiddle without breaking James Robinson's heart."

The appointment was made, and Guy went home to his hasty dinner, his Greek, and a little refreshing return afterwards to the books which had been the delight of younger days. There was no renewal of the burthen of despair that had so long haunted his evenings. Employments thickened on his hands as the days passed on. There was further correspondence about Coombe Prior and the curate, and consultations with Markham about farmer Todd, who was as obstinate and troublesome as possible. Guy made Markham come to Coombe Prior with him, examine and calculate about the cottages, and fairly take up the subject, though without much apparent chance of coming to any satisfactory result. A letter came from Mr. Ross, telling him even more than he had ventured to hope, for it brought a message from Charles himself. Charles had been delighted to hear of him, and had begged that he might be told how very sorry he had been not to write; and how incapable he had been, and still was; but that he hoped Guy would write to him, and believe him in the same mind. Mr. Ross added an account of Charles's illness, saying the suffering had been more severe than usual, and had totally disabled him for many weeks; that they had since called in a London surgeon, who had given him hope that he might be better now than ever before, but had prescribed absolute rest for at least six weeks longer, so that Charles was now flat on his back all day, beginning to be able to be amused, and very cheerful and patient.

The pleasure of entering into communication with Hollywell again, and knowing that Charles at least would be glad to hear from him, was so exquisite, that he was almost surprised, considering that in essentials he was where he was before, and even Charles could not be Amy.

END OF VOL. I.

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